

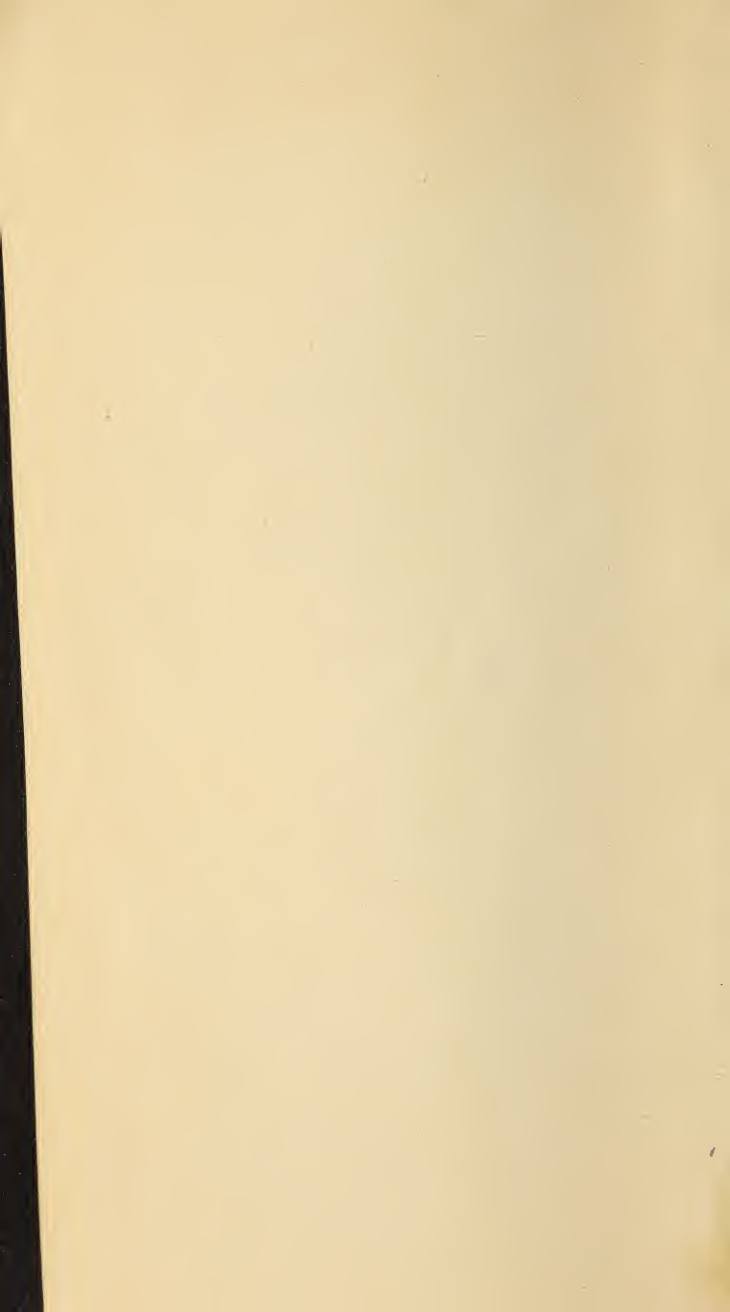


Class BJ1661

Book II 6

1829

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THE
Beauties of History;
OR,
PICTURES OF VIRTUE AND VICE:

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DRAWN FROM EXAMPLES OF

MEN EMINENT FOR THEIR VIRTUES,

OR

INFAMOUS FOR THEIR VICES.

Selected for the Instruction and Entertainment of Youth.

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM DODD, LL.D.

THE EIGHTH EDITION.

50¹ Ornamented with Eight Engravings, beautifully cut on Wood.



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PREFACE.

EDUCATION is universally admitted to be the most important duty that a parent owes to his children; and to instil the principles, and enforce the practice, of virtue, ought to be his first and constant care; for it is not only a duty which he owes to them, but is also due to society, of which they are in time to become efficient members.

Living examples from parents themselves are far superior to all precept or written instruction. But to strengthen the effects of these, or to supply their place, if unhappily wanting, *historical examples* are well calculated to make a lively impression upon young minds. First impressions being always the most durable, particular care should be taken that those examples represent virtue and goodness in their native loveliness, and vice and depravity in

their natural deformity. This will incline the youthful mind to aim at imitating the examples of the good: for what they love and admire, they will naturally wish to imitate; but they will avoid the examples of those who, by their vices and depravity, have made themselves hated by posterity.

Let the parent or tutor carry the youth back into other countries and times, and teach him to oppose the opinions and examples of those who are truly called the *great*, to the false principles and evil examples which, in the present age, are calculated to mislead and pervert the human mind. It will be often found, that a lecture from a Scipio or a Cyrus, concealed or disguised under the name of a story, will make a deeper impression upon young persons, than formal lessons enforced with the most studied gravity. These, being thrown in their way, as it were by chance, and for their gratification, meet a grateful reception, where the least appearance of designed instruction would frustrate the intention.

Opposed to modern vices and prejudices, let the youth hear of Dictators and Consuls taken from the plough, whose hands, grown hard by labour in the field, supported the tottering State, and saved the Commonwealth. So far from being desirous of amassing riches, let them be told, those men refused the gold which was offered them, and at their deaths did not leave enough to carry them to their graves.

Let them hear that the venerable patriot Fabricius, who was honoured with many triumphs for the services he had done his country, retired to his chimney-corner, and nurtured the decay of life with the vegetables which his own hands had planted and gathered: and that Augustus, who raised the Roman State to a higher pitch of glory than ever it was at before, who found Rome a city of brick, and left it a city of marble, was remarkably simple in his manner of living; that his palaces were plain, his furniture homely; that he slept in the same apartment during a reign of forty-years, and seldom wore any

clothes but what were spun for him by the Empress Livia, or his sister Octavia.

Seneca says “it is a great pleasure to me to compare the manners of Scipio with ours. That great man, the terror of Carthage, and honour of Rome, turned husbandman, and contented himself in a poor cottage. But who now could satisfy himself to live as he did?” And again, “Is it not glorious to behold a man who has passed through the command of armies, the government of provinces, the honours of a triumph, and the most dignified offices of magistracy in Rome; to see, I say, this man, (Cato,) mounted on a horse with his baggage fastened behind him, and without attendants!”

What youth can forbear reflection, when we relate to him the admirable remark of Scipio to Massinissa, “that chastity was the virtue he most valued himself upon: that youth have less to fear from an army of enemies, than from the alluring pleasures which on all sides surround them; and that whoever was able to govern his

passions, and subject them to reason, had gained a more glorious victory than he himself had just then obtained over Syphax?" This was a lecture founded on an example which he had some years before exhibited in his own person, when (as the reader will find recorded in the following pages) he restored a captive princess unsullied to her betrothed lover; an example the more extraordinary in a conqueror, young and unmarried. By this generosity Scipio secured the affections of all the people of Spain, who viewed him as a deity from heaven in human shape, conquering all opposition more by his virtues than by his arms: and, to record their veneration, they caused the action to be engraved on a silver shield, which they presented to Scipio.

Such are the examples by which young people are best taught their duty, from which they easiest acquire a relish for virtue, and learn most truly to estimate real merit under every form. Hence they are led to pass a right judgment on men and

things; not from outward appearances, but from what they really are: to overcome popular prejudices, imbibed perhaps from the nurse; to prefer doing private acts of bounty and liberality, which the heart only witnesses, to such as more ostentatiously strike the eyes, and force, as it were, public admiration and applause.

As the conversation of men of sound morals, and amiable demeanour, contributes most of any thing to inspire sentiments of virtue, and to restrain from vice; so the reading of examples, such as form the present Collection, from authors of undoubted veracity, forms the same kind of relation between us and the greatest men of antiquity. We thus converse, travel, and live with them; hear their discourse, and become witnesses of their actions; enter insensibly into their principles and opinions; and finally derive from them a portion of that greatness of soul, that disinterestedness, that hatred of injustice, and that love for the public good, which so brightens and adorns every page of their histories.

There is, after all, one caution to be observed, viz. that we do not go too largely into moral reflections. Precepts short, lively, and pointed, soonest enter, and remain longest impressed on the understanding. As a small seed, cast into a well-prepared soil, unfolds by degrees, and at last shoots into an hundred-fold increase; so, if these moral precepts do not sometimes exceed a word, a short reflection, a maxim, or a proverb, it will produce its effect in due time, though, for the moment, it seems lost and gone.

The greater part of this work was selected by the late *Dr. Dodd*, to illustrate and exemplify his *Sermons to Young Men*; a work highly necessary for every youth to peruse, and which none can peruse with indifference. The Sermons are intended for those who have arrived at maturity in judgment: the following work chiefly for youth of more tender years; as a cheap, and, the Editor hopes, a useful present, from which they may derive equal entertainment and improvement.

The additional Examples are very numerous, and will perhaps be found to furnish an agreeable variety to the mental repast.

The “Anecdotes of distinguished Persons,” published (though anonymously) by the late WILLIAM SEWARD, Esq. has furnished some very valuable historical addenda, relating to more modern times; and from many other sources of undisputed purity and veracity, the Editor has drawn materials for rendering still more deserving of universal approbation and general reception, a Collection of HISTORICAL BEAUTIES, which had in its original state acquired the favour of the critic,* the applause of the parent and tutor, and the patronage of the public at large; ascertained in the most decisive manner by an unexampled sale.

It was originally the intention of the Editor to increase more considerably the number of heads or subjects; but, on de-

* See the Reviews.

liberation, this was found unnecessary, as under every specific virtue was exposed examples of the contrary vice; and under every vice, its opposite virtue was displayed. For instance, under the article **INTEMPERANCE**, while we expose the hateful aspect of that sordid excess, we administer the amiable antidote in examples of **PRUDENCE** and **TEMPERANCE**; and so of the rest.

On the whole, the book is now submitted with great deference to the Public: and the Editor cannot forbear to hope that his labours will tend to the advancement of the great interests of Morality and Religion, while they assume the pleasing garb of Amusement and Delight.

STEPHEN JONES.

CONTENTS.

YOUTHFUL EXCESS. Page 1.

THE Hermit—Cresippus—George Neville—Cyrus—Asotus—Villiers, Duke of Buckingham—Henry the Fifth—Polemo and Xenocrates.

FILIAL LOVE. Page 9.

Naomi and Ruth—Cyrus—Cymon—Alexander the Great—Algerine Captive—Prince Henry—Boleslaus, King of Poland—Cicero and Quintus—Emperor of China—Sir Thomas More—Anapias and Amphinomus—A Daughter who sustained the Life of her imprisoned Mother by the Milk of her own Breasts—Epaminondas—Octavius and Metellus—Darius and the Scythians—Decimus and Decius—Lamprocles and Socrates.

FRATERNAL LOVE. Page 20.

Joseph and his Brethren—Cato—Scylurus and his Sons—The French Water-Bearer—Bishop Hall—The Portuguese Brothers shipwrecked—Titus and Domitian—Scipio Asiaticus—Henry, King of Arragon—Timoleon—Chærephon and Chærecartes.

CONTENTS.

EARLY APPLICATION TO WISDOM. Page 33.

Antisthenes—Count Oxenstiern—Roman Temple of Honour—Seneca—Alexander the Great—The Spartans—Agesilaus—Simonides—Pope Adrian IV.—Earl of Dorset—Tasso—Sir Thomas Smith—Sir John Mason.

ADVICE TO APPRENTICES. Page 41.

Solon—Amasis, King of Egypt—Turkish Custom—Telemachus—Cato—The Beggar of Bruges—Solomon—Cæpio Micithus—The Conscious Judge—Cæpio the Younger—Perrin and Lucetta.

ON BAD COMPANY. Page 56.

The Eastern Sage—Prince Eugène—Sir Matthew Hale—Earl of Rochester—Marcus—Eusebius—Mr. Nelson.

ON BAD BOOKS. Page 65.

The Earl of Rochester—Lucretius—Mr. Boyle and Hobbes the Atheist—The Lacedemonians—The Earl of Rochester—Dr. Young—Duke of Montaugier and Louis XIV. of France.

CONVERSATION. Page 72.

M. de La Roche—M. Varillas—St. Bernard—The Persian Soliman—Cicero—Epictetus's Rule for Conversing—Eusebius—Neander—Marshal Turenne—Sir Richard

CONTENTS.

Steele—Zeno, the Philosopher—Lord Bacon's Mode of regulating Conversation.

DUELLING. Page 82.

Eugenio—The Marquis de Renty—Sir Walter Raleigh—Turkish Sentiments on Duelling—Philip of Macedon's Decree against two Duellists—The Country Gentleman—Remarkable Challenge recorded by Cæsar—Viscount de Turenne—Cæsar and Anthony—Humorous Anecdote of General Guise.

ON ENVY. Page 92.

Plutarch's Comparison of Envious Persons—Mutius—Dionysius—Tiberius Cæsar—Maximianus the Tyrant—Narses—Alexander the Great—Richard the First of England, and Philip of France—Aristides and the Peasant.

EMPLOYMENT OF TIME. Page 98.

Seneca—Vespasian—The Younger Scipio—Alfred the Great—Queen Elizabeth—Gassendi—Socrates—Seneca—Augustus Cæsar—The Gymnosophist—The Futility of certain Methods of employing Time beautifully delineated.

FRIENDSHIP. Page 105.

Heroic Action of Hubert de St. Clare—Extraordinary Instance of Friendship recorded by M. Sedaine—Aretæus—David and Jonathan—Bishop of Cloyne—The Flanders Soldier and the Prince of Monaco—Psammenitus, King of Egypt—Dean Swift—Scipio

and Lælius—The late Prince of Wales and Mr. Glover—Marcus Varro and Calenus—Lucillus and Brutus—Damon and Pythias—Cardinal d'Amboise—King William and the Earl of Godolphin—Lord Baltimore and his School-fellow—Lord Stanhope.

GAMING. Page 119.

The Man of Pleasure—Mr. Locke—Lucius and Sapphira—The Female Gamester—Colonel Daniel—Lysander and Aspasia.

HUMANITY. Page 131.

The Senators of the Areopagus—Marcus Antonius the Philosopher—Alphonsus, King of Naples—Augustus Cæsar—Julius Cæsar—King Alfred the Great and the Beggar—Louis the Ninth of France—Henrietta Maria, Queen of Charles the First—Sir Philip Sydney—Richard Cromwell—King George the Second—Queen Caroline—The Duke de Montmorenci—Beau Nash—The late King of Prussia.

INDUSTRY. Page 142.

Horace—Menodemes and Asclepiades—Spinola—Montesquieu—Charles the Twelfth of Sweden—A Prisoner in the Bastille—Sir William Temple—The Philosopher's Reason why we should love Labour—Demosthenes the Orator—Varia Servilius—The Chinese Merchant—The Gentleman and the Farmer—Lope de Vega—Gassendi—Queen Mary—Dr. Johnson.

INGRATITUDE. Page 153.

Popilius Lena—Alexander the Great—Philip, King of Macedon—Keeble, Lord Mayor of London in 1511—Belisarius—Topal Osman, the Generous Turk, and Vincent Arnaud The English Soldier.

IMPURITY. Page 164.

Augustus Cæsar, and Athenodorus the Philosopher—The Italian Nobleman—Joseph in Egypt—Chevalier Bayard—Singular Example recorded in the Guardian.

INTEMPERANCE. Page 172.

Chremes and Esculapius—Lewis Cornaro—Diogenes—Solomon—Mr. Prior—Charles the Twelfth of Sweden—Sully.

JUSTICE. Page 184.

Mahomet, Emperor of the Turks—Diocles—Judge Hale—Sir Thomas More—Oliver Cromwell and the Quaker—Zaleucus—Alexander Severus—Themistocles and Aristides—Philip, King of Macedon—Cambyses, King of Persia—The Roman Soldier—Rhynsault and Sapphira.

LYING. Page 197.

Augustus Cæsar—Epaminondas—Cato the Younger—The Athenian Philosopher, Zenocrates—The Galley

Slave—Lord Herbert—Petrarch—Lord Somers and the pretended Poet—Homer—Aristotle—Apollonius—Sir Thomas Brown—Dr. Hawkesworth—The Miseries of Mendaculus.

PASSION. Page 204.

Athenodorus—Socrates—Julius Cæsar—Cotys, King of Thrace—Antigonus, King of Syria—The Farmer and his Dog—Field-Marshal Turenne—Alexander and Clytus—Herod of Judea—Louis XII.—Catherine de Medicis—The great Duke of Marlborough—The Rider not always wiser than his Horse.

PLEASURE. Page 210.

Portrait of Pleasure—The Choice of Hercules—Apicius—General Paoli—The Boy and the Butterfly.

PRIDE. Page 217.

Sethos, King of Egypt—Pharaoh Ophra—Alexander the Great—Menecrates the Physician—Empedocles the Philosopher—Cyrus—Caligula—Domitian—Heliogabalus—Commodus—Dioclesian—Curius Dentatus—Pompey—Pompey the Great—Poppæa Sabina, Wife of Nero—Xerxes—The Cham of Tartary—The Spanish Mendicant—John O'Neal—Pope Hildebrand—Xerxes—Attila, King of the Huns—Cleopas, King of Egypt—Cræsus and Solon—Alcibiades and Socrates.

RELIGION. Page 226.

Protagoras the Sceptic—Mr. Boyle and Hobbes the Atheist—Cyrus—Agesilaus—Alexander the Great—Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden—St. John and the Robber—The Emperor Constantius—Theodoric, King of the Goths—Dr. Boerhaave—The Emperor Charles the Fifth—Mr. Locke—Mr. Addison—Louis the Fourteenth of France—Cardinal Wolsey—Voltaire—Lord Peterborough—Sir William Waller—Edmund Waller and the Duke of Buckingham.

RIDICULE. Page 239.

He who thinks he shall die like a Dog, deserves to live like one—The Lord Chancellor Clarendon—The Earl of Chesterfield and Voltaire—Sully at the Court of Louis the Fourteenth—The Duchess of Burgundy and Louis the Fourteenth—Sir Isaac Newton and the pert Youth.

REVENGE. Page 245.

The Emperor Frederic—The Slave and his Master—The Italian's Revenge—The Adulterer—Cicero—Villiers, Duke of Buckingham—Tamas Schaw, the Persian Sovereign—The Sacrifice of Gualbertes—The General and the Soldier—Pericles—Amilcar—Aliveri, the Persian General—Demetrius Poliorcetes—Louis the Twelfth of France.

VIRTUE. Page 256.

Cato the Elder—Pædaretus of Lacedemon—The Spartan Mother—Mutius and Porsena—Pomponius and Mithridates—The Chinese Patriot—The Chinese Mother—Godiva, Duchess of Mercia—Infant Heroism—Julius Drusus—Valerianus—The Modesty of Plato—The young Philosopher—Phocion—Codrus, King of Athens, devotes his Life to save his Country—The Heroic Patriotism of Curtius—Cimon, the Athenian General—Æneas and Anchises—Manlius, the Roman Dictator—Antigonus—Herod—Amanda—Emperor of China—The imprisoned Merchant—The contented Cottager—Louis the Twelfth of France—The Duke of Montausier—Judge Jeffries—King Lemuel—Joseph in Egypt—Lady Fanshawe's Instructions to her Son—The Power of Virtue beautifully exemplified in the Book of Job.

BEAUTIES OF HISTORY.



Xenocrates the Philosopher, reproofing Polemo for his excesses.

YOUTHFUL EXCESS.

SENTIMENTS.

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

THE parable of the prodigal is no less beautiful and pathetic, than it is instructive and consolatory. It sets before us, in the most striking view, the progress and the fatal consequences of vice, on the one hand; and on the other, the paternal readiness of our Almighty Father to receive the returning penitent to pardon and mercy. It is pe-

cularly instructive to youth ; and would become very instrumental to preserve them from the pernicious allurements of sin and folly, if they would seriously reflect upon it ; if they would contemplate, in the example of the prodigal before them, the nature and the effects of those vices which brought him to extreme distress, and which will ever bring to distress all those who indulge them. And as there can be no question that the indulgence of these vices tends to misery, sorrow, and ruin, more or less conformable to that of the young man's in the parable ; so can there, on the other hand, be no doubt but the avoiding of these vices, and the cultivation of the contrary virtues, will, by the grace of God, produce present peace and future happiness.

EXAMPLES.

A dissipated young fellow seeing an aged hermit go by him barefoot, " Father," said he, " you are in a very miserable condition, if there is not another world." " True, son," replied the hermit ; " but what is thy condition if there is ?"

Cresippus, the son of Chabrias, a noble Athenian, was so profusely expensive, that after he had lavishly consumed all his goods and other estates, he put to sale even the very stones of his father's tomb, in the building whereof the Athenians had expended a thousand drachmas.

George Neville, brother to the great Earl of Warwick, at his instalment into the archbishoprick of York, made a prodigious feast to all the nobility, most of the principal clergy, and many of the great commoners ; the catalogue of which alone, as given by different writers, is sufficient to excite satiety and disgust. To prepare and attend

this feast, there were one thousand servitors, sixty-two cooks, and five hundred and fifteen menial apparitors in the kitchen. But, seven years after, fortune shifted the scene ; for the king, seizing on all his estate, sent him prisoner to Calais, where he was kept bound in the most extreme poverty ; justice thus punishing his former prodigality.

When Cyrus had received an account that the Lydians had revolted from him, he told Cræsus, with a great deal of emotion, that he had almost determined to make them all slaves. Cræsus intreated him to pardon them : “ But,” added he, “ that they may no more rebel, or be troublesome to you, command them to lay aside their arms, and wear long vests and buskins ; (that is, to vie with each other in the luxurious elegance and richness of their dress ;) order them to sing, and play upon the harp ; let them drink and debauch with impunity ; and you will soon see their spirits broken, and themselves changed from men to women, so that they will no more rebel, or give you any uneasiness.” The event effectually answered the intention.

How wretched is the condition of Asotus ! A little garret, with bare walls, is his sole apartment ; and of this, a flock bed, covered with rags, takes up two-thirds. Cold, nakedness, and shame, compel him to lie on that bed till the day is far spent. At night, a lamp, suited to the place, a true sepulchral lamp, rather adds horror than diffuses light. By the feeble glimmering of this languid flame, he eats a dry crust of brown bread, his whole repast ! Yet, poor as it is, he is not sure that he shall be able to renew even this to-morrow ; for he cannot dig, and to beg he is ashamed ! What now is become of his countless treasures, his immense revenues, which appeared sufficient to maintain a

province? As well may it be asked what becomes of water poured into a sieve, or of wax thrown into a furnace. Luxurious entertainments, gaming, women, usurers, and his steward, were the bottomless gulphs which swallowed up his opulence. But, is there not one among all his friends who knows him in his adversity, and stretches out the hand of bounty for his relief? Is there not one among all his friends? Alas! had he ever a friend? If he had, he would have him still; for, whatever may have been said, "Adversity never banished a friend:" it only disperses those who unjustly arrogate the name; and if adversity be productive of any good, (which cannot be denied,) this is one of its principal advantages; for the loss of a false friend is a real gain. If Asotus has any cause of complaint, it is only of the want of wisdom, and of never having had a friend that was sincere.

The above fancy-portrait is by no means destitute of originals in real life. We have a remarkable instance in George Villiers, created by James I. Earl, Marquis, and afterwards Duke of Buckingham, and invested with many high and lucrative offices. He is described to have been a gay capricious nobleman, of some wit, and great vivacity; the minister of riot, and counsellor of infamous practices; the slave of intemperance, a pretended atheist, without honour or principle, economy or discretion; and who, after various malproceedings and vicissitudes of fortune, after a justly-merited disgrace from the very court which fostered him, and an imprisonment in the Tower for some time; at last, in the reign of Charles II. deserted by all his friends, and despised by all the world, died in the greatest want and obscurity. Mr. Pope has so beautifully painted these circum-

stances in his epistle "On the Use of Riches," that we presume they will not be thought ill applied in furtherance of our general plan.

*" In the worst inn's worst room, with mat halfhung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung ;
On once a flock-bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed,
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies : alas ! how chang'd from him,
That life of pleasure, and that soul of whim !
Gallant and gay, in Cliffden's proud alcove,
The bower of wanton Shrewsbury and love ;
Or, just as gay at council, in a ring
Of mimic statesmen and their merry king.
No wit to flatter left of all his store ;
No fool to laugh at, which he valued more !
There, victor of his health, of fortune, friends,
And fame, this lord of useless thousands ends."*

Henry the Fifth, king of England, while prince of Wales, by his loose and dissolute conduct, daily gave his father great cause of pain and anxiety. His court was the common receptacle of libertines, debauchees, buffoons, parasites, and all that species of vermin which are at once the disgrace and ruin of young princes. The wild and riotous exploits of the prince and his companions were the general topics of conversation, and furnished matter of equal astonishment and detestation. This sad degeneracy in the heir of his crown was not more disagreeable to the king himself, who loved him with the most tender affection, than it was alarming to the nation in general, who trembled at the prospect of being one day governed by a prince of his flagitious character. But their fears,

to the universal admiration of all, were happily removed; for no sooner had the young king assumed the reins of government, than he shewed himself to be extremely worthy of the high station to which he was advanced. He called together the dissolute companions of his youth, acquainted them with his intended reformation, advised them to imitate his good example; and, after having forbidden them to appear in his presence again if they continued in their former courses, he dismissed them with liberal presents. He next chose a new council, composed of the wisest and the best men in the kingdom: he reformed the courts of law, by discarding ignorant and corrupt judges, and supplying their places with persons of courage, knowledge, and integrity. Even the chief justice, Gascoign, who had committed young Henry to prison for a former misdemeanor, and who, on that account, trembled to approach the royal presence, was received with the utmost cordiality and friendship; and, instead of being reproved for his past conduct, was warmly exhorted to persevere in the same strict and impartial execution of the laws. In a word, he seemed determined to become a new man, to bury all his juvenile excesses in utter oblivion, and to prove himself the common father and benefactor of all his subjects. Even before his royal predecessor's death, he appears to have been sensible of the folly and impropriety of his conduct, and resolutely bent to reform; for his father, being naturally of a jealous and suspicious disposition, listened at times to the suggestions of some of his courtiers, who meanly insinuated, that his son had some evil design upon his crown and authority. These insinuations filled him with the most anxious fears and apprehensions; and he might perhaps have

had recourse to very disagreeable expedients, to prevent the imaginary danger, had not his suspicions been timely removed by the prudent and exemplary conduct of the young prince; for, no sooner was he informed of his father's jealousy, than he repaired to court, and throwing himself with all humility and much emotion on his knees, accosted the king in these memorable words: "I understand, my liege, that you suspect me of entertaining designs against your crown and person. I own I have been guilty of many excesses, which have justly exposed me to your displeasure; but I take Heaven to witness, that I never harboured a single thought inconsistent with that duty and veneration which I owe to your majesty. Those who charge me with such criminal intentions, only want to disturb the tranquillity of your reign, and basely to alienate your affections from your son and successor. I have therefore taken the liberty to come into your presence, and humbly beg you will cause my conduct to be examined with as much rigour and strictness as that of the meanest of your subjects; and if I be found guilty, I will cheerfully submit to any punishment you shall think fit to inflict." The king was so satisfied with this prudent and ingenuous address, that he embraced him with great tenderness, acknowledging that his suspicions were entirely removed, and that for the future he would never entertain a thought to the prejudice of his loyalty and honour.

Polemo, an Athenian youth, was of so wretched and depraved a cast, that he not only delighted in vice, but gloried in the infamy of it. Returning from a debauch one morning after sunrise, and seeing the gate of Xenocrates the philosopher open, filled with wine as he was, besmeared with ointments, a garland on his head, and clad in a

loose and transparent robe, he entered the school, which at that early hour was thronged with a number of grave and learned men ; and, not content with so indecent an entrance, he sat down among them, on purpose to affront their eloquence and sobriety, and oppose their prudent precepts by his drunken follies. His coming had occasioned all who were present to be angry : only Xenocrates himself was unmoved ; and retaining the same gravity of countenance, and dismissing his present theme of discourse, he began a disquisition on modesty and temperance, which he represented in such lively colours before the young libertine, that Polemo, being much affected, first laid aside the crown from his head, then drew his arm within his cloak, changed the festival merriment that appeared in his face to seriousness and anxiety, and at last, through the whole course of his life, cast off all his luxury and intemperance. Thus, by a single, judicious, and well-adapted oration, the young man received so complete a cure, that, from being one of the most licentious of his time, he became one of the greatest philosophers and best men in Athens.

FILIAL LOVE.

SENTIMENTS.

“ He that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death !” In agreement wherewith, the wise man remarks, *“ the eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young eagles shall eat it !”*

THE ancient Romans, as well as some other people, gave parents the absolute right of life and death over their children : and the Chinese, at present, are remarkable for the reverence they exact from children to their parents. Their punishment of parricide, if such a thing ever happens, is the most exemplary and severe : the criminal in this case is cut into ten thousand pieces, which are afterwards burned ; his houses and lands are destroyed, and even the houses that stand near them, “ to remain as monuments of so detested a crime ; or, rather, that all remembrance of so abominable a villany may be effaced from the earth.”

Let their commands be ever sacred in your ears, and implicitly obeyed, where they do not contradict the commands of God : pretend not to be wiser than they who have had so much more experience than yourselves ; and despise them not, if haply you should be so blest as to have gained a degree of knowledge or of fortune superior to them. Let your carriage towards them be always respectful, reverent, and submissive ; let your words be always

affectionate and humble ; and especially beware of pert and ill-seeming replies ; of angry, discontented, and peevish looks. Never imagine, if they thwart your wills, or oppose your inclinations, that this ariseth from any thing but love to you : solicitous as they have ever been for your welfare, always consider the same tender solicitude as exerting itself, even in cases most opposite to your desires ; and let the remembrance of what they have done and suffered for you ever preserve you from acts of disobedience, and from paining those good hearts which have already felt so much for you, their children.

Doubtless you have all too much ingenuousness of temper, to think of repaying the fears and bleeding anxieties they have experienced for your welfare by deeds of unkindness, which will pierce them to the soul ; which will perhaps break the string of a heart, of which you, and you only, have long had the sole possession ! No, my young friends ; so far from this, you will think it the greatest happiness of your lives to follow our blessed Saviour's example, and to shew the most tender concern for your parents ; particularly if, like his, your's should happen to be a widowed parent ; a mother deprived of her chief happiness and stay, by the loss of a husband ; for which nothing can compensate, but the dutiful and affectionate behaviour of her children ; who are bound, in that case, to manifest double kindness, and to alleviate, by all the tenderness and affection imaginable, the many difficulties and sorrows of widowhood.

EXAMPLES.

A beautiful illustration of this virtue will be found in the scriptural story of Naomi and Ruth,

in the first chapter of Ruth, which is particularly recommended to the young reader's attention.

“And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house : the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them ; and they lifted up their voice and wept. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law ; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods : return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee ; for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried : the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her, &c.”

Cyrus, king of Persia, having conquered Cræsus, king of Lydia, in battle, the latter fled into Sardis : but Cyrus following, took the city by storm ; and a soldier running after Cræsus with a sword, young Cræsus, his son, who had been born dumb, and had so continued to that hour, from the mere impulse of natural affection, seeing his father in such imminent danger, suddenly cried out, “ O man, kill not Cræsus !” and continued to enjoy the faculty of speech the rest of his life.

Miltiades, a famous Athenian commander, died in prison, where he had been cast for debt. His son Cimon, to redeem his father's body for burial, voluntarily submitted himself a prisoner in his

room, where he was kept in chains till the debt was paid.

Olympias, the mother of Alexander the Great, was very morose and severe towards him; yet when Antipater, Alexander's deputy in Europe, wrote letters of great complaint against her to Alexander, the latter sent the following answer: "Knowest thou not, that one little tear of my mother's will blot out a thousand of thy letters of complaint?"

As some Christian captives at Algiers, who had been ransomed, were going to be discharged, the cruisers brought in a Swedish vessel, among the crew of which was the father of one of those ransomed captives. The son made himself known to the old man; but their mutual unhappiness, at meeting in such a place, may well be conceived. The young man, however, considering that the slavery his father was about to undergo would inevitably put an end to his life, requested that he might be released, and himself detained in his room; which was immediately granted: but when the story was told to the governor, he was so affected with it, that he caused the son likewise to be discharged, as the reward of his filial and exemplary tenderness.

One of the favourites of King Henry the Fifth, when Prince of Wales, having been indicted for some misdemeanor, was condemned, notwithstanding all the interest the prince could make in his favour: the latter was so incensed at the issue of his trial, as to strike the judge on the bench. This magistrate, whose name was Sir William Gascoign, acted with a spirit becoming his character: he instantly ordered the prince to be committed to prison; and young Henry, by this time sensible

of the insult he had offered to the laws of his country, and to his royal father, whose person was represented by the judge, suffered himself to be quietly conducted to gaol by the officers of justice. The king (Henry the Fourth) who was an excellent judge of mankind, was no sooner informed of this transaction, than he cried out in a transport of joy, "Happy is the king who has a magistrate possessed of courage to execute the laws! and still more happy, in having a son who will submit to such chastisement!"

Boleslaus the Fourth, king of Poland, had a picture of his father, which he carried about his neck, set in a plate of gold; and when he was going to say or do any thing of importance, he took this pleasing monitor in his hand, and kissing it, used to say, "My dear father, may I do nothing remissly, or unworthy of thy name!"

Among the incredible number of persons who were proscribed, under the second triumvirate of Rome, were the celebrated orator Cicero, and his brother Quintus. When the news of the proscription was brought to them, they endeavoured to make their escape to Brutus, in Macedon. They travelled together for some time, mutually condoling their bad fortune: but, as their departure had been very precipitate, and they were not furnished with money, and other necessaries for the voyage, it was agreed that Cicero should make what haste he could to the sea-side, to secure their passage, and that Quintus should return home to make more ample provision. But, as in most houses there are as many informers as domestics, his return was immediately made known, and the house, in consequence, filled with soldiers and assassins. Quintus concealed himself so effectually, that the soldiers could not find him. Enraged at

their disappointment, they put his son to the torture, in order to make him discover the place of his father's concealment: but filial affection was proof in this young Roman against the most exquisite torments. An involuntary sigh, and sometimes a deep groan, was all that could be extorted from the generous youth. His agonies were increased; but, with amazing fortitude, he still persisted in his resolution not to betray his father. Quintus was not far off; and it may better be imagined than it can be expressed, how the heart of a father must have been affected with the sighs and groans of a son expiring in torture to save his life. He could bear it no longer; but, quitting the place of his concealment, he presented himself to the assassins, beseeching them, with a flood of tears, to put him to death, and dismiss the innocent child, whose generous behaviour the triumvirs themselves, if informed of the fact, would judge worthy of the highest approbation and reward. The inhuman monsters, however, unmoved by the tears of the father or the son, answered that they both must die; the father because he was proscribed, and the son because he had concealed his father. Upon this a new contest of tenderness arose, who should die first; which, however, the assassins soon decided, by beheading them both at the same time.

The Emperor of China on certain days of the year pays a visit to his mother, who is seated on a throne to receive him; and four times on his feet, and as often on his knees, he makes her a profound obeisance, bowing his head even to the ground. The same custom is also observed through the greatest part of the empire; and if it appears that any one is negligent or deficient in his duty to his parents, he is liable to a complaint

before the magistrates, who punish such offenders with much severity. This, however, is seldom the case ; no people, in general, expressing more filial respect and duty than they.

Sir Thomas More seems to have emulated this beautiful example ; for, being lord chancellor of England at the same time that his father was a judge of the King's Bench, he would always, on his entering Westminster Hall, go first to the King's Bench, and ask his father's blessing, before he went to sit in the Court of Chancery, as if to secure success in the great decisions of his high and important office.

During an eruption of Mount *Ætna*, many years since, the danger it occasioned to the inhabitants of the adjacent country became very imminent, and the flames flying about, they were obliged to retire to a greater distance. Amidst the hurry and confusion of such a scene, (every one flying and carrying away whatever they deemed most precious,) two sons, the one named *Anapias*, the other *Amphinomous*, in the height of their solicitude for the preservation of their wealth and goods, recollected their father and mother, who, being both very old, were unable to save themselves by flight. Filial tenderness set aside every other consideration ; and "Where," cried the generous youths, "shall we find a more precious treasure than those who begat and gave us being ?" This said, the one took up his father on his shoulders, the other his mother, and so made their way through the surrounding smoke and flames. The fact struck all beholders with the highest admiration ; and they and their posterity ever after called the path they took in their retreat, "The Field of the Pious," in memory of this pleasing incident.

A woman of distinction in Rome had been condemned to a capital punishment. The prætor accordingly delivered her up to the triumvir, who caused her to be carried to prison, in order to be put to death. The gaoler, who had orders to execute her, was moved with compassion, and could not resolve to kill her : he determined, therefore, to let her die of hunger : besides which, he suffered her daughter to see her in prison ; taking care however, to have her diligently examined, lest she might bring her sustenance. As this continued many days, he was surprised that the prisoner lived so long without eating ; and suspecting the daughter, he watched her, and discovered that (like the famous Xantippe, daughter of Cymon) she nourished her parent with the milk of her own breasts. Amazed at so pious, and at the same time so ingenious a device, he ventured to tell the fact to the triumvir, and the triumvir mentioned it to the prætor, who thought the circumstance worthy of being related in the assembly of the people. The criminal was pardoned ; a decree passed, that the mother and daughter should be subsisted for the residue of their lives at the expence of the public ; and, to crown the whole, that a temple “ Sacred to Piety,” should be erected near the prison.

Epaminondas, the Theban general, being asked what was the most pleasing event that had happened to him in his whole life, cheerfully answered, “ It was, that he had obtained his glorious victory over the Leuctrians, at a time when his father and mother were both living to enjoy the news.”

While Octavius was at Samos, after the famous battle of Actium, which made him master of the universe, he held a council, in order to examine

the prisoners who had been engaged in Anthony's party. Among the rest was brought before him Metellus, oppressed with years and infirmities, disfigured by a long beard and dishevelled hair, but especially by his clothes, which, through his ill fortune, were become very ragged. The son of this Metellus sat as one of the judges; and, at first, could not easily discriminate his father through his deplorable appearance: at length, however, after viewing him narrowly, having recollected his features, instead of being ashamed to own him, he ran to embrace the old man, and cried bitterly. Then, returning toward the tribunal, "Cæsar," said he, "my father has been your enemy, I your officer; he deserves to be punished, and I to be rewarded. The favour I desire of you is, either to save him, on my account, or to order me to be put to death with him." All the judges were touched with commiseration at this affecting scene; and Octavius himself, relenting, granted to old Metellus his life and liberty.

Darius invaded Scythia with all the forces of his empire: the Scythians retreated, by little and little, till they came at length to the uttermost deserts of Asia. Here Darius sent his ambassador to them, to demand where it was that they proposed to conclude their retreat, and when they intended to begin fighting. They returned him for answer, with the spirit so peculiar to that nation, "That they had no cities, nor cultivated fields, for the defence of which they should give him battle; but, when he was come to the place of their father's sepulchral monuments, he should then understand in what manner the Scythians used to fight." So great a reverence had even that barbarous nation for the ashes of their ancestors!

The Emperor Decimus, intending and desiring

to place the crown on the head of Decius, his son, the young prince refused it in the most strenuous manner, saying, "I am afraid lest, being made an emperor, I should forget that I am a son. I had rather be no emperor and a dutiful son, than an emperor and such a son as hath forsaken his due obedience. Let then my father bear the rule; and let this only be my empire—to obey with all humility, and to fulfil whatsoever he shall command me." Thus the solemnity was waved, and the young man was not crowned; unless it be thought that this signal piety towards an indulgent parent was a more glorious diadem to the son than that which consisted merely of gold and jewels.

Lamprocles, the eldest son of Socrates, fell into a violent passion with his mother. Socrates was a witness to this shameful behaviour, and attempted the correction of it in the following gentle and rational manner. "Come hither, son," said he, "Have you never heard of men who are called ungrateful?" "Yes, frequently," answered the youth. "And what is ingratitude?" demanded Socrates. "It is to receive a kindness," said Lamprocles, "without making a proper return, when there is a favourable opportunity." "Ingratitude is a species of injustice, therefore," said Socrates. "I should think so," answered Lamprocles. "If then," pursued Socrates, "ingratitude be injustice, does it not follow that the degree of it must be proportionate to the magnitude of the favours which have been received?" Lamprocles admitted the inference; and Socrates thus pursued the interrogations. "Can there subsist higher obligations than those which children owe to their parents, from whom life is derived, supported, and by whose good offices it is rendered honourable, useful, and happy?" "I acknowledge the truth

of what you say," replied Lamprocles ; " but who could suffer without resentment, the ill humours of such a mother as I have ?" " What strange thing has she done to you ?" said Socrates. " She has a tongue," replied Lamprocles, " that no mortal can bear." " How much more," said Socrates, " has she endured from your wrangling, fretfulness, and incessant cries in the period of infancy ? What anxiety has she suffered from the levities, capriciousness, and follies of your childhood and youth ? What affliction has she felt, what toil and watching, has she sustained in your illness ?"

FRATERNAL LOVE.

SENTIMENTS.

Behold how comely a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

WHAT inexpressible delight, when brothers and sisters of one family live together in all the harmony of friendship and good esteem, mutually delighted and charmed with each other's presence and society! Peace dwells in their bosom, and transport beats at their heart. They know how to alleviate each other's troubles and difficulties; they know how to impart and double each other's felicity and pleasure. And if, perchance, their aged parents live, who have formed them thus to love, whose early care provided for them this high feast of the most delicate sensations, what encreasing raptures do they feel from blessing those parents with this fruit of their care! O, ye happy parents! if I could envy any beings upon earth, it were you, who see your youth renewed in good, and worthy children flourishing around you; who see those children amply crowning your days and nights of past solicitude, not only with the most reverential respect to yourselves, but with what you wish still more, if possible, with the firmest and most respectful love to each other; who see those children, with all the kindness of that love you sought to inspire, like olive branches, verdant around you, blessed in you, blessed in each other, blessed in themselves; the providence of God smi-

ling upon them ; success and honour attending their steps.

EXAMPLES.

THE scriptural examples of Joseph and his brethren we think it necessary to point out in Genesis, chap. 43, 44, 45, 46, and 47, and to remark, that this history is not exceeded in interesting passages by any other, sacred or profane.

“ A famine continuing sore in the land, Jacob said unto his sons, Go again, and buy us food ; and if it must be so, now take also your brother Benjamin, and arise and go unto the man. And they brought presents unto Joseph, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare ; and said, Is your father well ? Is he alive ? And he lifted up his eyes, and saw Benjamin his brother : and his bowels did yearn towards his brother ; and he sought where to weep, and he entered his chamber, and wept there : and he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself. Then he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men’s sacks with food as much as they can carry ; and put my cup, the silver cup, into the sack of Benjamin the youngest. And the steward did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. But Joseph commanded his steward to follow them, and to search their sacks, and to bring them back. And when Judah and his brethren were returned into the city, Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done ? The man in whose hands the cup is found shall be my servant ; and as for you, get you in peace unto your father. But they said, Our father will surely die, if he seeth that the lad is not with us ; and we

shall bring down the grey hairs of thy servant, our father, with sorrow to the grave. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me; and there stood no man with him, whilst Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud, and said unto his brethren, I am Joseph: Doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him, for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: and he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to save your lives by a great deliverance. Haste you, and go up to my father; and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord over all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not. And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen; and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast; and there will I nourish thee, for yet there are five years of famine, lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And behold your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth which speaketh unto you. And you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and ye shall haste, and bring down my father hither."

"And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them, and after that, his brethren talked with him. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel, his father, to Goshen; and presen-

ting himself unto him, he fell upon his neck for some time. And Joseph placed his father and his brethren; and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land."

Cato, when but a boy, being asked whom he loved best, answered, "My brother Cæpas;" and so often as the same question was asked, the same reply was given. In proof of his affection, when he grew to manhood, he never went to supper (says Plutarch) nor out of his house to the market place, nor into the fields, without him: and when Cæpas died, Cato mourned exceedingly, and erected a tomb of Thracian marble to his memory, which cost him eight talents.

Scylurus, the Scythian, having fourscore sons, desired nothing so much as to bring them up in the love of each other: and, to shew them how invincible such a concord would render them, as he lay on his death-bed, he called them around him, and giving each of them a bundle of javelins, bade them try if they could break the bundles. The young men having attempted, and declaring it impracticable, Scylurus untied the bundles in their presence, broke the javelins, one by one, with the greatest ease, and from thence took occasion thus to address his children: "Behold my sons, your strength while linked together in the bonds of amity: on the contrary, how weak, and what an easy prey you must be, when separated in your interests by discord and sedition!"

As one of the water bearers at the fountain of the Fauxbourg St. Germain, in Paris, was at his usual labours in August, 1766, he was taken away by a gentleman in a splendid coach, who proved to be his own brother, and who, at the age of three years, had been caried to India, where he made a considerable fortune. On his return to France

he made enquiry respecting his family; and hearing that he had only one brother alive, and that he was in this humble condition of a water bearer, he sought him out, embraced him with great affection, and brought him to his house, where he gave him bills for upwards of a thousand crowns per annum.

The learned and pious Bishop Hall tells us, in his "Specialties," that, instead of being sent to the university when a boy, he was very near being placed for education under a private tutor at Leicester: but his elder brother having occasion to go to Cambridge about this time, and waiting upon a fellow of Emanuel College, the latter, on hearing of the diversion of old Mr. Hall's former purposes from the university, importunately dissuaded him from that new course, professing to pity the loss of such good hopes. The elder brother, moved with these words, on his return home fell upon his knees to his father, and besought him to alter so prejudicial a resolution, and not to suffer the young man's hopes to be drowned in a shallow country channel, but revive his first intentions for Cambridge; adding, in the zeal of his affection, that if the chargeableness of that course were the hindrance, he should be rather pleased to sell part of that land which, in the order of nature, he was to inherit, than to abridge his brother of so happy a means to perfect his education. This very uncommon and amiable instance of generosity had its due effect; and the world sufficiently knows the success and blessing which attended it through the excellent labours of this eloquent and devout prelate.

The father of that eminent lawyer, Mr. Serjeant Glanvill, had a good estate, which he intended to settle on his eldest son; but he proving a vicious

young man, and there being no hopes of his recovery, he devolved it upon the serjeant, who was his second son. Upon the father's death, the eldest, finding that what he had before considered as the mere threatenings of an angry old man, were now but too certain, became melancholy, which, by degrees, wrought in him so great a change, that what his father could not prevail in while he lived, was now effected by the severity of his last will. His brother, observing this, invited him, together with many of his friends, to a feast ; where, after other dishes had been served up, he ordered one, which was covered, to be set before his brother, and desired him to uncover it ; upon his doing which, the company, no less than himself, were surprised to find it full of writings : and still more, when the serjeant told him, "that he was now doing what he was sure his father would have done, had he lived to see the happy change which they now all saw in his brother ; and therefore he freely restored to him the whole estate."

In the year 1585, the Portuguese carracks sailed from Lisbon to Goa, a very rich and flourishing colony of that nation, in the East Indies. On board of one of these vessels were no less than 1200 souls, mariners, passengers, priests, and friars. The beginning of the voyage was prosperous ; but not many days after, through the perverseness of the pilot, the ship struck on a rock, and instant death began to stare them in the face. In this distress the captain ordered the pinnace to be launched ; into which, having tossed a small quantity of biscuit, and some boxes of marmalade, he jumped in himself, with nineteen others, who, with their swords, prevented the coming of any more, lest the boat should sink. Thus scantily equipped, they put off into the great Indian Ocean, without

a compass to steer by, or any fresh water but what might happen to fall from the heavens, whose mercy alone could deliver them. At the end of four or five days the captain died with sickness; and they were obliged, to prevent confusion, to elect one of their company to command them. This person proposed to them to draw lots, and cast every fourth man over-board, their small stock of provision being now so far spent as not to be sufficient at very short allowance to sustain life above three days longer. To this they agreed; so that there were four to die out of their unhappy number, the captain, a friar, and a carpenter, being exempted by general consent. The lots being cast, three of the first submitted to their fate, after they had confessed and received absolution. The fourth victim was a Portuguese gentleman, that had a younger brother in the boat; who, seeing him about to be thrown overboard, most tenderly embraced him, and with tears besought him to let him die in his room; enforcing his arguments by telling him, "that he was a married man, and had a wife and children at Goa, besides the care of three sisters, who absolutely depended upon him for support; whereas himself was single, and his life of no great importance:" he therefore conjured him to suffer him to supply his place, assuring him that he had rather die for him than live without him. The elder brother, astonished, and melted with his generosity, replied, "that, since the Divine Providence had appointed him to suffer, it would be wicked and unjust to permit any other to die for him, but especially a brother, to whom he was so infinitely obliged." The younger, however, persisting in his refusal, would take no denial, but, throwing himself on his knees, held his brother so fast that the company could not disengage him.

Thus they disputed a while ; the elder bidding him be a father to his children, and recommending his wife and sisters to his protection ; but all he could say could not make the younger desist. This was a scene of tenderness that must fill every humane breast with pity. At last the constancy of the elder brother yielded to the piety of the other, and suffered the gallant youth to supply his stead ; who, being cast into the sea, and a good swimmer, soon got to the stern of the pinnace, and laid hold of the rudder with his right hand. This being perceived by one of the sailors, he cut off the hand with his sword. The youth dropping into the sea, presently rose again, and regained his hold with his left hand, which received the same fate by a second blow. Thus dismembered of both hands, he made a shift, notwithstanding, to keep himself above water with his feet, and two stumps, which he held bleeding upwards. This moving spectacle so excited the pity of the whole company, that they cried out, “ He is but one man ; let us endeavour to save him.” Accordingly he was taken into the boat, where he had his hands bound up as well as the place and circumstances would admit. They then continued rowing all night ; and the next morning, when the sun rose (as if Heaven would reward the gallantry and piety of this young man) they descried land, which proved to be the mountains of Mozambique, in Africa, not far from a Portuguese colony : thither they all safe arrived, where they remained till the next ship from Lisbon passed by, and carried them to Goa. At that city, Linschoten, a writer of good credit, assures us he himself saw them land, supped with the two brothers that very night, and had the story from their own mouths.

Titus, the Roman emperor, who was called, for

his virtues, "the delight of mankind," bore such a brotherly affection towards Domitian, that, though he knew he had spoken irreverently of him, and had solicited the army to rebellion, yet he never treated him with the less love or respect even on that account, nor would suffer others to do so ; but called him his partner and successor in the empire ; and sometimes, when they were alone together, he besought him, not only with earnest entreaties, but with tears, that he would bear the same brotherly love towards him as he always had and should ever find from him.

During the war with Antiochus, the province of Asia fell to the lot of Lucius, the brother of Scipio Africanus ; but the senate, not thinking his abilities adequate to the charge, seemed inclinable rather to commit the conduct of the war to Caius Lælius, his colleague, with whom his brother Africanus was in the most intimate friendship. But no sooner had the latter heard of their deliberation, than he earnestly besought the senate not to transfer the province, though it were to Lælius himself, which had fallen by lot to his brother ; promising at the same time that he would accompany Lucius into Asia, and serve with him in quality of his legate. Thus the elder brother fostered and supported the younger : the valiant defended the weak ; and so aided him with his counsel, that at length Lucius returned to his country triumphant, and was crowned with the glorious surname of Scipio Asiaticus.

Henry, king of Arragon and Sicily, left, at his death, his only son, John, a child of two-and-twenty months old, whom he intrusted to the care and fidelity of his brother Ferdinand. This prince was a man of great virtue and merit, and therefore the eyes of the nobles and people were fixed upon

him ; and not only in private discourses, but in the public assemblies, he had the general voice and consent to be chosen king of Arragon. With unshaken magnanimity, however, he remained deaf to these offers ; alleged and asserted the right of his infant nephew, and the custom of the country, together with his dying brother's last will, " which," said he, " you are bound the rather to maintain, by how much the more incapable the young prince is to do it." His words, notwithstanding, had not the effect he wished, and the assembly adjourned for that day. Soon after, they met again, in hopes that, having had time to consider of it, he would now accept their suffrages. Ferdinand, apprized of their purpose, prepared himself for their reception, caused the little child to be clothed in royal robes, and, having hid him under his garments, went and took his seat in the assembly. Upon which, the master of the horse, by order of the states, coming up, and asking him " Whom, O Ferdinand, is it your pleasure to have declared our king?" the generous prince, with a sharp look and solemn tone, replied, " Whom but John, the son of our brother?" Having said this, he immediately took the infant from under his robe, and, lifting him upon his shoulders, with a loud voice, cried, " God save King John !" Then setting down the child, and commanding the royal banners to be displayed, he cast himself first to the ground before him ; and all the rest, moved by his illustrious example, did the like.

Timoleon, the Corinthian, is a noble pattern of fraternal love ; for being in a battle with the Argives, and seeing his brother fall down dead with the wounds he had received, he instantly leapt over his dead body, and with his shield protected it from insult and plunder ; and though sorely

wounded in this generous enterprize, he would not by any means retreat to a place of safety, till he had seen the corpse carried off the field by his friends. How happy for Christians would they imitate this heathen, and as tenderly screen from abuse and calumny the wounded reputation or dying honour of an absent or defenceless brother !

Two brothers named Chærephon and Chærecrates, had quarrelled with each other ; and Socrates being acquainted with them, was solicitous to restore their amity. Meeting, therefore, with Chærecrates, he thus accosted him : “ Is not friendship the sweetest solace in adversity, and the greatest enhancement of the blessings of prosperity ? ” “ Certainly it is,” replied Chærecrates ; “ because our sorrows are diminished, and our joys increased, by sympathetic participation.” Amongst whom, then, must we look for a friend ? ” said Socrates. “ Would you search amongst strangers ! They cannot be interested about you. Amongst your rivals ? They have an interest in opposition to your’s. Amongst those who are much older or younger than yourself ? Their feelings and pursuits will be widely different from your’s. Are there not, then, some circumstances favourable, and others essential, to the constitution of friendship ? ” “ Undoubtedly there are,” answered Chærecrates. “ May we not enumerate,” continued Socrates, “ amongst the circumstances favourable to friendship, long acquaintance, common connections, similitude of age, and union of interest ? ” “ I acknowledge,” said Chærecrates, “ the powerful influence of these circumstances : but they may subsist, and yet others be wanting, that are essential to mutual amity.” “ And what,” said Socrates, “ are those essentials which are wanting in Chærephon ? ” “ He has forfeited my esteem and at-

tachment," answered Chærecrates. "And has he also forfeited the esteem and attachment of the rest of mankind?" continued Socrates. "Is he devoid of benevolence, generosity, gratitude, and other social affections?" "The gods forbid," cried Chærecrates, "that I should lay such a heavy charge upon him! His conduct to others, I believe, is irreproachable; and it wounds me the more, that he should single me out as the object of his unkindness." "Suppose you have a very valuable horse," resumed Socrates, "gentle under the treatment of others, but ungovernable when you attempt to use him, would you not endeavour by all means to conciliate his affection, and to treat him in the way most likely to render him tractable? Or if you have a dog, highly prized for his fidelity, watchfulness, and care of your flocks, who is fond of your shepherds, and playful with them, and yet snarls whenever you come in his way, would you attempt to cure him of this fault by angry looks or words, or any other marks of resentment? You would surely pursue an opposite course with him. And is not the friendship of a brother of far more worth than the services of a horse, or the attachment of a dog? Why then do you delay to put in practice those means which may reconcile you to Chærephon?" "Acquaint me with those means," answered Chærecrates, "for I am a stranger to them." "Answer me a few questions," said Socrates. "If you desire that one of your neighbours should invite you to his feast, when he offers a sacrifice, what course would you take?" "I would first invite him to mine." "And how would you induce him to take the charge of your affairs when you are on a journey?" "I should be forward to do the same good office to him in his absence." "If you be solicitous to

remove a prejudice which he may have conceived against you, how would you then behave towards him?" "I should endeavour to convince him, by my looks, words, and actions, that such prejudice was ill-founded." "And if he appeared inclined to reconciliation, would you reproach him with the injustice he had done you?" "No," answered Chærecrates, "I would repeat no grievances." "Go," said Socrates, "and pursue that conduct towards your brother which you would practise to a neighbour. His friendship is of inestimable worth; and nothing is more delightful to the gods, than for brethren to dwell together in unity."

EARLY APPLICATION TO WISDOM.

SENTIMENTS.

“ Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy getting, get understanding ; exalt her, and she shall promote thee : she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace ; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

CICERO (than whom no man was a better judge, for no man more earnestly sought, or better understood the true nature of wisdom ; no man, I mean, of the heathen world) has given nearly this definition of wisdom. “ What,” says he, “ is more desirable than wisdom ; what more excellent in itself ; what more useful to man, or more worthy his pursuit ? They who earnestly seek for it are called philosophers ; for philosophy, in the strict meaning of the word, is no other than the love of wisdom ; but wisdom, as defined by the ancient philosophers, is the knowledge, of things divine and human, and of their efficient causes ; the study of which, whoever despises, I know not what he can think worthy of his approbation. For whether you seek for an agreeable amusement, or a relaxation from care, what can be comparable to those studies, which are always searching out for something that may tend to make life more easy and happy ? Are you desirous of learning the principles of fortitude and virtue ? This, or none beside, is the art by which you may acquire them. They who affirm that there is no art in things of the

greatest moment, while nothing even the most trifling, is attained without the aid of art, are men of no reflection, and guilty of the grossest error : but if there is any science of virtue, where shall it be learned, if not in the school of this wisdom ?”

An ignorant, idle man, is dead weight on society ; a wicked, profligate man, is a pest, is a nuisance to society : but a wise and virtuous man, who labours by all means in his power to advance the universal good, to improve the knowledge and the happiness of mankind, is at once an ornament to his nature, and a blessing to the community ; a good planet, shining with a benign influence on all around him ; the truest resemblance of his God, whose goodness is continually displaying itself through the whole extent of being ; and, like that God, seeking pleasure in conferring good, and feeling happiness according to the degree in which he communicates it.

EXAMPLES.

Antisthenes being asked what he got by his learning, answered, “That he could talk to himself, could live alone, and needed not go abroad and be beholden to others for delight.” The same person desired nothing of the gods to make his life happy, but the spirit of Socrates, which would enable him to bear any wrong or injury, and to continue in a quiet temper, whatever might befall him.

Count Oxenstiern, the chancellor of Sweden, was a person of the first quality, rank, and abilities, in his own country, and whose care and success, not only in the chief ministry of affairs there, but in the greatest negotiations of Europe, during his time, rendered him no less considerable abroad. After all his knowledge and honours,

being visited in his retreat from public business by Commissioner Whitelock, our ambassador to Queen Christina, at the close of their conversation, he said to the ambassador, "I, Sir, have seen much, and enjoyed much of this world; but I never knew how to live till now. I thank my good God, who has given me time to know him, and likewise myself. All the comfort I take, and which is more than the whole world can give, is the knowledge of God's love in my heart, and the reading of this blessed book;" laying his hand on the Bible. "You are now, Sir," continued he, "in the prime of your age and vigour, and in great favour and business; but this will all leave you, and you will one day better understand and relish what I say to you. Then you will find that there is more wisdom, truth, comfort, and pleasure, in retiring and turning your heart from the world, in the good spirit of God, and in reading his sacred word, than in all the courts and all the favours of princes."

The Romans, we are told, built their Temple of Virtue immediately before that sacred to Honour, to teach that it was necessary to be virtuous before being honoured. St. Augustine observes, that though these temples were contiguous, there was no entering that of Honour till after having passed through that of Virtue.

Seneca, after a serious study of all the philosophy in his time in the world, was almost a Christian in his severe reproofs of vice, and commendations of virtue. His expressions are sometimes divine, soaring far above the common sphere of heathen authors. How beautiful is that sentence of his, in the preface to his Natural Questions! "What a pitiful thing would man be, if his soul did not soar above these earthly things!" And

though he was sometimes doubtful about the future condition of his soul, yet he tells his dear Lucius with what pleasure he thought of its future bliss : and then goes on to argue that the soul of man hath this mark of divinity in it, that it is most pleased with divine speculations, and converses with them as with matters in which it is most nearly concerned. "When this soul," saith he, "hath once viewed the vast dimensions of the heavens, it despises the meanness of its former little cottage. Were it not for these contemplations, it had not been worth our while to have come into this world, nor would it make us amends for any pains and care we take about this present life." At length, he concludes his arguments with this remarkable reason for inferring the blessedness of pious souls : "Let us not wonder that good men go to God after death, since God vouchsafes to enter into them here, in order to render them good ; for no soul can be good without him."

Alexander the Great being asked why he honoured his master Aristotle more than Philip his father, he replied, "My father brought me down from heaven to earth, but my master made me reascend from earth to heaven." The one only gave him life, the other instructed him how to live well.

The Spartans, we find, paid a particular attention to the peculiar genius and disposition of their youths, in order the better to adapt them to such employments as were most suitable to their capacities, and wherein they might be most beneficial to society. Among them it was not lawful for the father himself to bring up his children after his own fancy. As soon as they were seven years old, they were all enrolled in several companies, and disciplined by the public. The old men were

spectators of their performances, who often raised emulations among them, and set them at strife one with another, that, by those early discoveries, they might see how their several talents lay, and without any regard to their quality, dispose of them accordingly, for the service of the commonwealth. By this means Sparta soon became the mistress of Greece, and famous through the whole world for her civil and military discipline.

Agesilaus, king of Sparta, being asked what he thought most proper for boys to learn, answered, "What they ought to do when they come to be men." Thus a wiser than Agesilaus hath inculcated: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Simonides, an excellent poet, the better to support himself under narrow circumstances, went the tour of Asia, singing from city to city the praises of their heroes and great men, and receiving their rewards. By this means, having at last become wealthy, he determined to return to his own country by sea, being a native of the Island of Ceös. Accordingly he went on board a vessel, which had not been long on the voyage before a terrible tempest arose, and reduced it to a wreck in the midst of the sea. Upon this, some of the people packed up their treasures, others their most valuable merchandise, and tied them round their bodies, as the best means of supporting their future existence, should they escape the present dangers. But amidst all their solicitude, a certain inquisitive person, observing Simonides quite inactive, and seemingly unconcerned, asked him, "What! don't you look after any of your effects?" "No," replied the poet, calmly, "all that is mine is with me." Then some few of them, and he among the rest, took to swimming; and several got safe

ashore, while many more perished in the waves, wearied and encumbered with the burdens they had bound about them. To complete the calamity, some plunderers soon after came down upon the coast, and seized all that each man had brought away with him, leaving them naked. The ancient city of Clazomene happened to be near at hand, to which the shipwrecked people repaired. Here a certain man of letters, who had often read the verses of Simonides, and was his great admirer, hearing him one day speak in the market-place, enquired his name; and finding it was he, gave him a welcome reception to his own house, and supplied him with clothes, money, and servants to attend him; while the rest of the company were forced to carry a letter about this foreign city, setting forth their case, and begging bread. The next day Simonides met with them in his walks, and thus addressed them: "Did I not tell you, my friends, that all which I had was with me? but you see all that which you could carry away with you perished." Thus wisdom is proved to be the most durable possession, and the best security amidst every want and trial.

Nicholas Breakspear, who, on his advancement to the popedom, assumed the name of Adrian IV. was, in the early part of his life, reduced to the necessity of submitting to servile offices for bread. He studied in France, where, though he laboured under the pressures of poverty, he made a wonderful progress in learning. One day, on an interview with an intimate friend, he told him that all the hardships of his life were nothing in comparison to the papal crown; and, speaking of the difficulties and sorrows he had experienced, he observed, "that he had been, as it were, strained through the alembic of affliction." This great and exemplary

man was in such high veneration, that Frederick, king of the Romans, at an interview with him, in Italy, condescended to hold the stirrup while he mounted his horse. He was the only Englishman that ever sat in the papal chair.

Thomas, earl of Dorset, who lived in the reign of James I. may not only be ranked with the chief men of his age as a scholar and a statesman, but was, moreover, an admirable manager of his private fortune and of the public revenue. The former, indeed, he had been called to from the most substantial motives: for it seems he succeeded early in life to an immense estate, which, as he thought it set him above economy, he lavished without care. However, in a few years, by means of his excessive magnificence and dissipation, he found himself involved in debt. The indignity of being on a certain day, kept in waiting by an alderman, of whom he had occasion to borrow money, opened his eyes, and made so deep an impression upon him, that he resolved from that moment to become a better economist. Accordingly, we are told he managed his finances so well, that he was thought a proper person to succeed the great Cecil, lord Burleigh, as lord high treasurer of England.

The famous Torquato Tasso, by his poem entitled *Rinaldo*, extended his reputation throughout all Italy, but greatly chagrined his father, who thought it might seduce him from studies more advantageous. Accordingly he went to Padua, where his son then was, to remonstrate against his apparent purpose of devoting himself to philosophy and poetry, and made use of many very harsh expressions; all which Tasso heard with a patience and tranquillity that made the old gentleman still more angry. At last, "Of what use,"

cried he, "is that philosophy on which you value yourself so much?" "Sir," replied Tasso calmly, "it has enabled me to endure patiently the harshness even of your reproofs.

Sir Thomas Smith, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth, a few months before he died, sent to his friends, the bishops of Winchester and Worcester, entreating them to draw up for him, out of the word of God, the plainest and best directions for making his peace with him; adding, "That it was great pity men knew not to what end they were born into the world, till they were just at the point of quitting it."

Sir John Mason was born in the reign of Henry VII. and lived in high esteem with Henry VIII. Edward VI. Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth; having been a privy counsellor to each of the four last, and an accurate observer of all the various revolutions and vicissitudes of those times. When he lay on his death-bed, he called his family together, and addressed them in the following terms: "Lo! here have I lived to see five princes, and have been a counsellor to four: I have seen the most remarkable things in foreign parts, and been present at most state transactions for thirty years together: and I have learned this, after so many years' experience, "that seriousness is the greatest wisdom, temperance the best physician, and a good conscience the best estate: and, were I to live again, I would exchange the court for the cloister; my privy counsellor's bustles for an hermit's retirement; and the whole life I have lived in the palace, for one hour's enjoyment of God in my closet. All things else forsake me, except my God, my duty, and my prayers."

ADVICE TO APPRENTICES.

SENTIMENTS.

Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ; doing the will of God from the heart: with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

TIME is no longer your own, but your master's; therefore be careful not to idle or squander it away, but to improve every moment of it; that so you may not only fulfil the duties of your station, but gain such allowed hours as may be properly employed to your own emolument and satisfaction. There is nothing so valuable and important as time; the flying moments of it, once passed, are never to be retrieved. Ever mindful hereof, delay not the immediate performance of that which, the occasion slipped, you may perhaps never have it in your power to perform at all.

So must you be particularly careful of your trust. Your master's interests are become your's; you owe him the strictest fidelity; and if you are found deficient herein, you must never expect either confidence or character. Fidelity shews itself in words and action, and may be distinguished into truth in words, and integrity in deeds. Nothing is so dishonourable and disgraceful as lying, or a deviation from truth. It is always the mark of a mean and worthless spirit; a vice, God

knows, which too early discovers itself in the human mind; and to discourage and eradicate which, no caution or attention can be too great or severe. As it is founded in the worst principles, so it is productive of the greatest evils; being not only extremely vicious and faulty in itself, but generally the introduction to, and cloak for, other faults and vices. Simply to lie is an offence; to lie in order to conceal a fault, is a double offence: but to lie, with a malicious purpose, with a view to injure or prejudice others, is an offence aggravated tenfold, and truly diabolical; an indication of the most corrupt and abandoned heart; and the mischief of it is, that they who indulge themselves in the practice at all, generally are led on by the father of lies to the very excess of it. Never, therefore, in a smaller or greater matter, suffer your lips to deviate from the truth; speak it honestly, openly, and without reserve: you cannot conceive how easily the mind is corrupted by the slightest indulgence in falsehood, by the least licence given to little mean reservations, equivocations, and mental chicaneries. Be assured that a fault is always doubled by denying it; an open, frank confession disarms resentment, and conciliates affection: such a regard to truth will gain you credit, and give you dignity. It is high, it is an amiable character of any man, of a young man more especially, to say, that his veracity is always to be depended upon; whereas the contrary is just as low and despicable. And if you accustom yourself to falsehood, such will be your character; for the natural consequence of being caught in one lie is, that from that time, whatever you shall say will be received with doubt or suspicion. And I would ask, Can there be any thing more disgraceful than to stand in such a light

amongst your fellow-creatures, as to have your word despised and unregarded, and even the truth you speak disbelieved?

There is great reason to presume, that those who are conscientious in their words will be so in their actions; that they will shew the same regard to truth in the one as in the other: this is indispensably requisite. The least temptation to fraud must never be suffered to remain a moment in your hearts; dishonesty will blast your reputation, and all your hopes; and it will still be the worse in you, to whom your master intrusts the care of his property; for a breach of trust is ever the highest aggravation of an offence. Always therefore consider yourself as intrusted with the charge of your master's property; consider it as most sacred; and while you never allow in yourself a single thought of embezzling or injuring it, never permit yourself to connive at such practices in others. Next to the being vicious ourselves, is the consenting to, or conniving at, vice in others; and he is not far from falling into the same sin, who can see it with unconcern, and without reproof, in another. Not that I would have you busy and pragmatical, ready at all times to whisper idle stories, in the ears of your superiors: this will certainly render you extremely odious and disgusting to those who are upon a level with you; your life will become uneasy; and your own conduct will be most scrupulously examined.

You owe to your master, and indeed to yourself, industry and close application to business. He expects it from you as his right; and you will do well to give it, not only for that reason, but for your own sake also; because thus you will not only improve in the proper knowledge of that business which you are apprenticed to learn, but

will preserve yourself from the numberless dangers attendant upon idleness. Every thing is possible to industry ; and it will be very difficult to produce any instances of men who, joining strict honesty to continued industry, have failed of their due success in this world.

In short, in this, and in all other instances of your duty to your master, let one general rule ever have its due influence on your conduct, and it will always direct you right : “ Consider his interests and welfare as your own.” Thus, as a son with a father, you will never injure, nor see him injured : on the contrary, sensible of your duty to him and to your God, you will study to act your part with fidelity, recommending yourself, by such conduct, at once to your earthly and your Heavenly Master.

EXAMPLES.

Solon, the Athenian legislator, enacted that the son should not relieve his father when he was old, except he had brought him up to some occupation ; and this he did that all persons might have some honest trade, by their skill and industry in which the community might be benefited, and themselves and their families maintained. He ordered also, that the council of Areopagus should enquire how every man lived, and punish all who were found idle.

The Egyptians enjoined all men to be of some trade ; and a law was made by Amasis, one of their kings, that every man once a year should give an account how he lived ; and that the person who could not show by what means he maintained himself, should be put to death.

Among the Turks, every man must be of some trade, the Grand Signior himself not excepted.

Mahomet the Great, who conquered Greece, learned the art of a carver, and used to make wooden spoons.

Those who neglect the duties of their profession, whatever it may be, are exposed to the greatest danger. An honest man's heart is in his business : when he quits it, it is as a fish quits its element, for recreation, or from necessity ; but he soon returns to it again.

The Archbishop of Cambray makes Telemachus declare, that, though he was young in years, he was old in the art of knowing how to keep both his own and his friend's secrets. "When my father," says the prince, "went to the siege of Troy, he took me on his knees, and after embracing and blessing me, as he was surrounded by the nobles of Ithaca, 'O my friends!' said he, 'into your hands I commit the education of my son ; if you ever loved his father, show it in your care towards him ; but, above all, do not omit to form him just, sincere, and faithful in keeping a secret.' These words of my father," says Telemachus, "were continually repeated to me by his friends in his absence, who made no scruple of communicating to me their uneasiness at seeing my mother surrounded with lovers, and the measures they designed to take on that occasion." He adds, that he was so gratified by being thus treated like a man, and by the confidence reposed in him, that he never abused it : nor could all the insinuations of his father's rivals ever get him to betray what was committed to him under the seal of secrecy.

"There is nothing," says Plato, "so delightful as the hearing or the speaking of truth." For this reason it is, that there is no conversation so agreeable as that of a man of integrity who hears with-

out any intention to deceive. An advocate, once pleading the cause of his client at Rome, before one of the prætors, could only produce a single witness in a point where the law required the testimony of two persons ; upon which the advocate insisted upon the integrity of the person whom he had produced : but the prætor told him, that where the law required two witnesses, he would not accept one, though it were Cato himself. Such a speech from a person who sat at the head of a court of justice, and while Cato was still living, shows us more than a thousand examples, the high reputation this great man had gained among his contemporaries on account of his sincerity.

As I was sitting, says an ancient writer, with some senators of Bruges, before the gate of the senate-house, a beggar presented himself to us, and with sighs and tears, and many lamentable gestures, expressed to us his miserable poverty, and asked our alms ; telling us at the same time, that he had about him a private maim, and a secret mischief, which very shame restrained him from discovering to the eyes of men. We all pitying the case of the poor man, gave him each of us something, and departed. One, however, among us, took the opportunity to send his servant after him, with orders to enquire of him what that private infirmity might be, which he found such cause to be ashamed of, and was so loth to discover. The servant overtook him, and delivered his commission ; and, after having diligently viewed his face, breast, arms, legs, and finding all his limbs in apparent soundness, “ Why, friend,” said he, “ I see nothing whereof you have any such reason to complain.” “ Alas ! Sir,” said the beggar, “ the disease which afflicts me is far dif-

ferent from what you conceive, and is such as you cannot discern : yet it is an evil which hath crept over my whole body : it has passed through my very veins and marrow in such a manner, that there is no member of my body that is able to work for my daily bread. This disease is by some called idleness, and by others sloth." The servant, hearing this singular apology, left him, in great anger, and returned to his master with the above account ; but, before the company could send again, to make further enquiry after him, the beggar had very prudently withdrawn himself.

Action, we are assured, keeps the soul in constant health, but idleness corrupts and rusts the mind ; for a man of great abilities may, by negligence and idleness, become so mean and despicable, as to be an incumbrance to society, and a burden to himself. When the Roman historians described an extraordinary man, it generally entered into his character, as an essential, that he was *incredibili industria diligentia, industria diligentia singulari*—"of incredible industry, of singular diligence and application." And Cato, in Sallust, informs the senate, that it was not so much the arms, as the industry, of their ancestors, which advanced the grandeur of Rome, and made her mistress of the world. Similar to which is the observation of Solomon—"Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men."

Cepio was adjudged to death for some offence in the reign of Augustus Cæsar ; but his servant, in the night-time, carried him in a chest out of Rome, and brought him, by repeated nocturnal journeys, from Ostia to the Laurentine Fields, where was his father's villa. Afterwards, in order

to be at a further distance from danger, they took ship ; but being forced back by a tempest, and driven on the coast of Naples, the servant was there apprehended, and brought before the centurion, who put him to a strict examination. Every art, however, was ineffectual to warp him from his duty ; nor could he be prevailed on, either by bribes or menaces, to make any discovery of his master's retreat.

Micithus, domestic of Anaxilaus, king of the Rhegini, was left by his dying master, to govern his kingdom, and superintend his children during their minority. Throughout his viceroyship, he behaved himself with such clemency and justice, that the people saw themselves happily placed under a person, whose quality was neither unfit to bear rule, nor too mean for the high post he occupied ; and yet, when the children of Anaxilaus came of age, he immediately devolved the power into their hands, and at the same time transferred to them the treasures which, by his economy, he had accumulated ; accounting himself merely as their guardian and trustee : while, for his own part, content with a small pittance, he retired to Olympia, and there lived in the private enjoyment of respect, security, and the noble testimony of a faithful and upright conscience.

The following, we are informed, is a true relation of an event which happened in a neighbouring state, not many years ago. A jeweller, a man of good character and considerable wealth, having occasion, in the way of business, to travel at some distance from the place of his abode, took along with him a servant. He had with him some of his best jewels, and a large sum of money, to which his servant was likewise privy. The master having occasion to dismount on the road, the servant

watched his opportunity, took a pistol from his master's saddle, and shot him dead on the spot. Then rifling him of his jewels and money, and hanging a large stone to his neck, he threw him into the nearest canal. With this booty, he made off to a distant part of the country, where he had reason to believe that neither he nor his master were known. There he began to trade, in a very low way at first, that his obscurity might screen him from observation ; and, in the course of many years, seemed to rise up, by the natural progress of business, into wealth and consideration ; so that his good fortune appeared at once the effect of industry, and the reward of virtue. Of these he counterfeited the appearance so well, that he grew into great credit, married into a good family, and by laying out his hidden stores discreetly as he saw occasion, and joining to all a universal affability, he was at length admitted to a share of the government of the town, and rose from one post to another, till at last he was chosen chief magistrate. In this office he maintained a fair character, and continued to fill it with no small applause, both as governor and judge ; till one day, as he sat on the bench with some of his brethren, a criminal was brought before him, who was accused of murdering his master. The evidence came out full ; the jury brought in their verdict that the prisoner was guilty, and the whole assembly waited the sentence of the president of the court, which happened to be himself, in great suspense. Meanwhile, he appeared to be in unusual disorder and agitation of mind ; his colour changed often : at length he arose from his seat, and coming down from the bench, placed himself just by the unfortunate man at the bar, to the no small astonishment of all present.—“ You see before you,” said he, address-

ing himself to those who had sat on the bench with him, "a striking instance of the just awards of heaven, which this day, after thirty years concealment, presents to you a greater criminal than the man just now found guilty." Then he made an ample confession of his heinous offence, with all its peculiar aggravations: "Nor can I," continued he, "feel any relief from the agonies of an awakened conscience, but by requiring that justice be forthwith done against me in the most public and solemn manner." We may easily suppose the amazement of all, especially his fellow judges. They accordingly proceeded, upon his confession, to pass sentence upon him, and he died with all the symptoms of a penitent mind.

A man who gains a precarious livelihood by unlawful practices, never enjoys a truly quiet moment: his conscience is continually preying upon his mind, and he feels himself under incessant apprehensions and fears. He is afraid to lie down in his bed, fearing he may be seized before morning; he is afraid to stir out in the day-time; and thinks himself suspected by every eye; he is afraid to be in company; he is afraid to be alone: and yet he cannot refrain from his vicious pursuits; temptation, especially in youth, has such a prevailing power over the human mind. Be always assured, that no acquisitions of guilt can compensate the loss of that solid, inward comfort of mind, which is the sure companion of innocence and virtue; nor can it in the least counterbalance the evil of that horror and anxiety, which, in their room, guilt always introduces into their bosom.

Scipio the younger, when only twenty-four years of age, was appointed by the Roman republic to the command of the army against the Spaniards. Soon after the conquest of Carthagera, the capi-

tal of the empire, his integrity and virtue were put to the following exemplary and ever-memorable trial, related by historians, ancient and modern, with universal applause. Being retired into his camp, some of his officers brought him a young virgin of such exquisite beauty, that she drew upon her the eyes and admiration of all. The young conqueror started from his seat with confusion and surprise ; and like one thunderstruck, seemed to be robbed of that presence of mind and self-possession so necessary in a general, and for which Scipio was remarkably famous. In a few moments, having rallied his straggling spirits, he enquired of the beautiful captive, in the most civil and polite manner, concerning her country, birth, and connections ; and, finding that she was betrothed to a Celtiberian prince, named Allucius, he ordered both him and the captive's parents to be sent for. The Spanish prince no sooner appeared in his presence than, even before he spoke to the father and mother, Scipio took him aside, and to remove the anxiety he might be in on account of the young lady, he addressed him in these words : “ You and I are young, which admits of my speaking to you with more liberty. Those who brought me your future spouse, assured me, at the same time, that you loved her with extreme tenderness ; and her beauty left me no room to doubt it, Upon which, reflecting that if, like you, I had thought of making an engagement, and were not wholly engrossed with the affairs of my country, I should myself desire that so honourable and laudable a passion might find favour ; I therefore think myself happy in the present conjuncture to do you service. Though the fortune of war has made me your master, I desire to be your friend. Here is your wife ; take her,

and may the gods bless you with her ! One thing, however, I would have you be fully assured of, that she has been amongst us as she would have been in the house of her father and mother. Far be it from Scipio to purchase a loose and momentary pleasure at the expense of virtue, honour, and the happiness of an honest man ! No ; I have kept her for you, in order to make you a present worthy of you and me. The only gratitude I require of you, for this inestimable gift, is, that you will be a friend to the Roman people." Allucius's heart was too full to make him any answer ; but, throwing himself at the general's feet, he wept aloud. The captive lady fell down in the same posture, and remained so till the aged father, overwhelmed with transports of joy, burst into the following words : " Oh, divine Scipio ! the gods have given thee more than human virtue ! Oh, glorious leader ! Oh, wondrous youth ! Does not that obliged virgin give thee, while thus praying to the gods for thy prosperity, rapture infinitely above all the transports thou couldst have reaped from the possession of her injured person ?" Such was Scipio ! a soldier, a youth, a heathen ! Nor was his virtue unrewarded : Allucius charmed, with such magnanimity, liberality, and politeness, went into his own country, and published, on all occasions, the praises of his generous and humane victor ; crying out, " That there was come into Spain a young hero like the gods ; who conquered all things less by the force of his arms, than by the charms of his virtue, and the greatness of his beneficence." Upon this report, continues the historian, all Celtiberia submitted to the Romans ; and Allucius returned, in a short time, to Scipio, at the head of 1400 chosen horse, to facilitate his future conquests ; and, to render the marks of

his gratitude still more durable, Allucius caused the action above related, to be engraven on a silver shield, which he presented to Scipio; a present infinitely more inestimable and glorious than all his treasures and triumphs. This shield, which Scipio carried with him when he returned to Rome, was lost in his passing the Rhone, with part of the baggage: it continued in that river till the year 1665, when some fishermen found it; and it is said to have been in the cabinet of the late unhappy French king, Louis XVI.

Perrin lost both parents before he could articulate their names, and was obliged to a charity-school for his education. At the age of fifteen, he was hired by a farmer to be a shepherd, in a neighbourhood where Lucetta kept her father's sheep. They often met, and were fond of being together. Five years thus passed, when their sensations became more serious. Perrin proposed to Lucetta to demand her from her father: she blushed, and confessed her willingness. As she had an errand to the town next day, the opportunity of her absence was chosen for making the proposal. "You want to marry my daughter," said the old man: "have you a house to cover her, or money to maintain her? Lucetta's fortune is not enough for both. It won't do, Perrin; it won't do." "But," replied Perrin, "I have hands to work: I have laid up twenty crowns of my wages, which will defray the expense of the wedding: I'll work harder, and lay up more." "Well," said the old man, "you are young, and may wait a little: get rich, and my daughter is at your service." Perrin waited for Lucetta's returning in the evening. "Has my father given you a refusal?" cried Lucetta: "Ah, Lucetta!" cried Perrin, "how unhappy I am for being poor! But I have not lost all hopes: my circumstances may

change for the better." As they were never tired of conversing together, the night drew on, and it became dark. Perrin making a false step, fell on the ground. He found a bag which was heavy. Drawing towards a light in the neighbourhood, he found that it was filled with gold. "I thank heaven," cries Perrin, in a transport, "for being favourable to our wishes. This will satisfy your father, and make us happy." In their way to her father's house, a thought struck Perrin: "This money is not ours: it belongs to some stranger; and perhaps this moment he is lamenting the loss of it: let us go to the vicar for advice: he has always been kind to me." Perrin put the bag into the vicar's hand, saying that at first he looked on it as a providential present, to remove the only obstacle to their marriage; but that he now doubted whether he could lawfully detain it. The vicar eyed the lovers with attention: he admired their honesty, which appeared even to surpass their affection. "Perrin," said he, "cherish these sentiments: heaven will bless you. We will endeavour to find out the owner: he will reward thy honesty: I will add what I can spare; you shall have Lucetta." The bag was advertised in the newspapers, and cried in the neighbouring parishes. Some time having elapsed, and the money not demanded, the vicar carried it to Perrin: "These twelve thousand livres bear at present no profit: you may reap the interest at least: lay them out in such a manner, as to insure the sum itself to the owner, if he shall appear." A farm was purchased, and the consent of Lucetta's father to the marriage was obtained. Perrin was employed in husbandry, and Lucetta in family affairs. They lived in perfect cordiality; and two children endeared them still the more to each other. Perrin one evening returning homeward

from his work, saw a chaise overturned, with two gentlemen in it. He ran to their assistance, and offered them every accommodation his small house could afford. "This spot," cried one of the gentlemen, "is very fatal to me : ten years ago, I lost here twelve thousand livres." Perrin listened with attention : "What search made you for them?" said he. "It was not in my power," replied the stranger, "to make any search. I was hurrying to Port l'Orient, to embark for the Indies ; for the vessel was ready to sail." Next morning, Perrin shewed to his guests his house, his garden, his cattle, and mentioned the produce of his fields. "All these are your property," addressing the gentleman who had lost the bag : "the money fell into my hands ; I purchased this farm with it ; the farm is your's. The vicar has an instrument which secures your property, though I had died without seeing you." The stranger read the instrument with emotion : he looked on Perrin, Lucetta, and the children. "Where am I?" cried he ; "and what do I hear? What virtue in people so low! Have you any other land but this farm?" "No," replied Perrin ; "but you will have occasion for a tenant, and I hope you will allow me to remain here." "Your honesty deserves a better recompence," answered the stranger ; "my success in trade has been great, and I have forgot my loss. You are well entitled to this little fortune ; keep it as your own." What man in the world would have acted like Perrin? Perrin and Lucetta shed tears of affection and joy. "My dear children," said he, "kiss the hand of your benefactor. Lucetta, this farm now belongs to us, and we can enjoy it without anxiety and remorse." Thus was honesty rewarded. Let those who desire the reward practise the virtue.

ON BAD COMPANY.

SENTIMENT.

Evil communications corrupt good manners.

ALL nature loves and seeks society : even the animals, which are not of the most ferocious and untameable kind, delight to herd together, and feel a satisfaction in each other's presence. Man, peculiarly formed for society, has no joy in absolute solitude : cut off from his fellow creatures, so far is he from partaking of the pleasures of life, that he finds it extremely difficult to support his being. From society proceed all the refined comforts and superior enjoyments of life ; and from society (so very much mixed are all human blessings) proceed the greatest dangers and evils of life. It is unpleasing to think, that, from our chief advantages, our greatest evils should flow ; but this is not the only instance wherein the observation holds good. Society you must, you will have : good society is not less difficult to attain, than it is advantageous when attained : evil society, as common as the air, is as blasting to the manners as air, when it bears on its noxious wings pestilence and disease. The choice of bad company evidently proves a bad disposition of mind. " Tell me with whom you go," says the proverb, " and I will tell you what you are." Free society is a matter of absolute choice ; and, like another alliance, can never be contracted without consent

of parties. Like universally assorts with like; and it is as impossible for a virtuous mind, desirous of improvement, and studious to excel in duty, to take pleasure in the company of idle, ignorant, and vicious persons, as it is for the two greatest contraries in nature to unite. Where the sentiments, the conversation, the pursuits, totally disagree, what but strife and contention can ensue? Is it probable that persons thus dissentient will delight to associate merely to jar and contend? Far different is the end and design of social intercourse. Indeed, the matter wants very little proof: the choice of bad companions is as infallible a proof of a bad mind, as the choice of bad, trifling, and unimproving books, would be of a depraved taste, in the man who had a large and excellent library of the best and most improving authors around him, whence to make his selection.

EXAMPLES.

"Art thou any kind of tree?" said an eastern sage to a lump of odoriferous earth, which he picked up in a grove. "Thou charimest me with thy perfume:" It answered him, "I am only a vile piece of earth; but I dwelt for some time with the rose." One of our poets has prettily conveyed this sentiment, by observing,

*Who can travel through th' Arabian groves,
And not bear thence some fragrance?"*

The Divine Mercy had inspired a vicious man to request admission into a society of sages, whose morals were holy and pure. He obtained what he earnestly desired: the constant example of their virtues deeply affected him. He could not be

taught a better lesson. He made no delay to imitate them, and to relinquish his former ill habits. He became just, sober, patient, laborious, beneficent, amiable. His good works could not be contradicted; but odious motives were attributed to them; and though his actions were commended, his person was not beloved or esteemed. In short, most people seemed inclined to pass their judgment upon him from what he had been, not from what he was. This injustice pierced him with sorrow: he shed tears in the bosom of an old and venerable friend, whom he knew to be just and humane. "My son," said the sage to him, "thou art of more worth even than thy reputation: give God thanks for it. Happy is the man who can say, "My enemies and my rivals censure me in the vices which I no longer retain." What signifies it, if thou art but good, that others persecute thee as a wicked man? Hast thou not for thy consolation two clear-sighted witnesses of thy actions; God, and thine own conscience?"

The royal poet observes, with respect to our associates in life, "With the holy, thou shalt be holy: and with a perfect man, thou shalt be perfect: with the clean, thou shalt be clean; and with the froward, thou shalt learn frowardness."

The following is related by a writer of undoubted reputation. Speaking of Prince Eugene, of Soissons, he observes, "All those qualifications and endowments that can procure love and esteem shone conspicuous in this young prince. A graceful person, the most engaging affability and sweetness of temper, a quick understanding, a heroic ardour, a skill in the sciences, and other parts of polite literature, (which was the more extraordinary in a prince then but fifteen years of age), united to justify the exalted hopes conceived of him. He

shewed a strong inclination to a military life, and, at that early period, was already inuring himself to it; so that, commonly, a bare board served him for a pillow. The king had taken the greatest care of his education, and suffered him to be ignorant of no branch of knowledge which might contribute to his future advancement.

“How great things were to be expected from a prince of such endowments! disposed to the worthiest pursuits, and, closely applying himself to them, making a most happy progress. Alas! every pleasing expectation formed of him proved in the event vain! Bad companions insinuated themselves into his good esteem; bad examples found him unable to withstand them. When the vicious were his companions, their manners were no longer his abhorrence: by associating with them, he soon became as abandoned as the worst of them; and, in a few years, having lost his virtue, unhappily lost his life.” There cannot be a stronger or more melancholy proof than this, of the fatal influence which bad company and bad examples have over even the best cultivated and best disposed minds.

The learned and pious Sir Matthew Hale, when a youth, was too much addicted to the society of some vicious people, which he did not break off till an alarming accident drove him from it. Being invited, with some other young students, to a merry-making out of town, one of them, during the carouse, called for so much wine, that, notwithstanding all Mr. Hale could do to prevent it, he went on in his excess till he fell down as dead before them. All present were not a little terrified, and did all they could to bring him to himself again. This particularly affected Mr. Hale, who went into another room, and shutting the door, fell on his

knees, and prayed earnestly to God, both for his friend, that he might again be restored to life, and that himself might be forgiven for having countenanced such excesses. Moreover, he vowed to God, that he would never again keep company in that manner nor drink another health while he lived. His friend recovered, and Mr. Hale most religiously observed his vow till his dying day. It was this great man's resolution, drawn up by him in writing for his own private use, with regard to Company (among other articles of conduct), to "do good to them; to use God's name reverently, while with them; to beware of leaving an ill example among them; and to receive good from them, if they were more knowing than himself."

That ever memorable instance of God's mercy, Wilmot Earl of Rochester, was in early life always much given to riot and licentiousness. During his travels, however, and those scenes at sea in which he was soon after engaged, his mind being better occupied, he had so entirely laid down his former intemperance, that, at his return, we are informed, he detested it. But falling again into company that loved those excesses, he was, though not without difficulty, and by many steps, brought back to it, and that in a shocking degree: for the natural glow of his fancy being inflamed by wine, made him so extravagantly pleasant, that many, to be the more diverted by his humour, made it their study to engage him deeper and deeper in intemperance; and this at length so entirely subdued him, that (as he told Dr. Burnet, his historian) for five years together he was continually drunk: not, indeed, all the while under the visible effect of it; but his blood was so inflamed, that he was not in all that time cool enough to be

perfectly master of himself. This led him to say and do many wild and unaccountable things ; and by this, he said, he had broken the firm constitution of his health, which once seemed so strong that nothing was too hard for it ; and he suffered so much in his reputation, that he almost despaired to recover it. This course of life, however, was not always equally pleasant to him. He had often sad intervals of severe reflection upon it : and though at that time he had not these awakened in him from any deep principle of religion, yet the horror which nature excited in him (especially in some sicknesses) made him too easy to receive those ill and sceptical principles with which others endeavoured to possess him ; so that he was soon brought to set himself to secure and fortify his mind against religion, by dispossessing himself all he could of the belief or apprehensions of it. To complete his ruin, the licentiousness of his temper, with the briskness of his wit, disposed him to love the conversation of those who divided their time between lewd actions and irregular mirth : and thus he came at last to bend his wit, and direct his studies and endeavours, to support and strengthen those evil principles both to himself and others. At length God was pleased in a very striking manner to bring him, by pain and sorrow, and strong conviction, to repentance ; during the course of which, he said to Bishop Burnet, “ In what a condition shall I be, if I relapse after all this ? ” But added, “ He trusted in the grace and goodness of God, and was resolved to avoid all those temptations, that course of life, and company, that were so likely to ensnare him ; and he desired to live on no other account, but that he might, by the change of his manners, some way take off the high scandal his former behaviour had given.” This the

dying penitent uttered in various terms to his spiritual friend ; with other expressions to some of his former companions, which well became his state : giving them a charge to publish any thing concerning his conversion, which might be a means to reclaim others ; “ and praying God, that, as his life had done much hurt, so his death might do some good.”

When Marius was sent against the Cimbri, his soldiers durst not look the enemy in the face : their gigantic stature and barbarous aspect awed the Roman bravery. But when they had beheld these same barbarous Germans three days together from the camp, their spirits revived, their congealed courage began to circulate through every vein ; they not only fought, but overcame the foe they had so lately dreaded. Reverse the medal, and apply it to those connections in which the young and inexperienced are daily enlisted to their hurt ; the effect is obvious and striking. A youth educated in the principles of Christianity, cannot at first think of the breach of a commandment without trembling and inward convulsion : but when he slides into seemingly trivial commissions, the associates of his unguarded hours strew every pitfall of pleasure with flowers. At first, a damp arises over his mind, and he almost inclines to doubt there is some error in his progress. He becomes uneasy for a while ; yet, urged by example, continues his course, and at length conscience begins to slumber : its reproaches are faint, its stings scarcely perceptible ; custom blunts the edge of reflection ; and, when once arrived at this pitch of insensibility, he hesitates not to many impieties, which before were abhorrent to his nature. So true is that ancient aphorism, “ *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus* ;” No one becomes very wicked on a sudden Negligence

and distrust first unite to weaken the sacred sanction of God's commands, before men can presume to break them.

Eusebius was not one of those plodders who seem to disband all society, and to forswear conversation; who place virtue in sourness, and confound piety with spleen: no; he was free, easy, and cheerful; and never refused to partake of those festivities which recreate the mind, and refresh the body, without prejudice to the conscience. He lamented in silent indignation, to behold Christians living the lives of the lowest Pagans, and profaning the best religion with the foulest crimes. "What pleasure," would he say, "can any Christian take in those places where vice rides in triumph, and virtue groans in a dungeon; where goodness and decency lie under contempt, and irregularity receives applause; where the best actions are lampooned, and the worst glossed over, or deified by their short-sighted votaries? This consideration weaned Eusebius from the love of the world, and he withdrew into the country, there blending all the qualities of a gentleman so handsomely with the duties of a Christian, that it was hard to judge whether his behaviour was more genteel, or more religious. He was wont to say "Those lie under a great mistake, who fancy that virtue is an enemy to good breeding; that a man must turn off civility to become a saint; and exclude himself from the society of all men, in order to keep up a correspondence with his God. No," continued he, "Christianity makes men honest, indeed, but it does not make them clowns; it forbids grimace, but not sincerity; and it puts a mean between foppishness and rusticity. Virtue smooths the brow as well as the conscience, and knows how to temperate innocent mirth with a seasonable

reservedness and decorum. So that we may, if we so incline, keep up to the height of our duty to God, without dropping our obligations to good neighbourhood, and abandoning the comforts of society."

Mr. Nelson too, the learned and pious author of many excellent books of devotion, was, says Mr. Seward, in his 'Anecdotes,' peculiarly splendid in his dress and appearance. He was not willing to render the practice of piety more difficult than was necessary : and, to attract mankind to goodness, submitted to embellish the charms of virtue by the graces of elegance. This gentleman is thought to have been the original from which Mr. Richardson drew the Character of Sir Charles Grandison.



The death-bed of Rochester.

ON BAD BOOKS.

SENTIMENTS.

*The flowers of eloquence, profusely poured
O'er spotted vice, fill half the letter'd world ;
Wit, a true pagan, deifies the brute,
And lifts our swine enjoyments from the mire :
Can powers of genius exercise their page,
And consecrate enormities with song ?*

YOUNG.

“ WORDS,” says Mr. Addison, “are the transcript of those ideas which are in the mind of man : writing and printing are the transcript of words. As the Supreme Being has expressed, and, as it were, printed his ideas in the creation, men express

their ideas in books; which, by this great invention of letter-press, may last as long as the sun, and moon, and perish only in the general wreck of nature. Books are the legacies which a great genius leaves to mankind, and which are delivered down from generation to generation, as presents to the posterity of those who are yet unborn. Now, if writings are thus durable," continues he, "and may pass from age to age, throughout the whole course of time, how careful should an author be of committing any thing to print, that may corrupt posterity, and poison the minds of men with vice and error! Writers of great talents, who employ their parts in propagating immorality, and seasoning vicious sentiments with wit and humour, are to be looked upon as the pests of society, and the enemies of mankind. They leave books behind them (as it is said of those who die in distempers, which breed an ill-will towards their own species) to scatter infection and destroy their posterity.—They act the counterparts of a Confucius or a Socrates; and seem as it were sent into the world to deprave human nature, and sink into the condition of brutality."

There are books whose immediate and direct tendency it is to serve the cause of immorality, and to be the foul vehicles of indecency, obscenity, and pollution. These are a kind of writings so impure and defiling, that it is scarcely possible to speak of them without incurring some degree of defilement; for who can touch pitch and be clean? And they are so prejudicial and obnoxious to all purity of mind, that the least share of virtue, I must believe, will be sufficient to render them odious and disgusting. Nor will you, if you have the least regard for religion, the least reverence for yourselves, ever be persuaded to degrade your

nature so much, as to peruse such infamous and detestable performances.

It is, indeed, a melancholy reflection, that any such books should be extant among us ; it is melancholy to think that any of the human species should have so far lost all sense of shame, all feelings of conscience, as to sit down deliberately, and compile a work entirely in the cause of vice and immorality ; a work which, for aught they know, may serve to pollute the minds of millions, and propagate contagion and iniquity through generations yet unborn ; living, and spreading its baneful effect, long after the unhappy hand which wrote it is mouldered into dust.

The English language abounds with excellent writers in every branch of useful and entertaining science : you will reap, from an attention to such authors, not only an increase of wisdom, but also of virtue, her fair companion ; and by these will be introduced to an acquaintance with such happiness as vice never knew, as all the gayest scenes of immorality could never afford.

EXAMPLES.

The Earl of Rochester, at a time when he lay dangerously sick, and had desired the assistance of a neighbouring curate, confessed to him with great contrition, that nothing sat more heavy at his heart, than the sense of his having seduced the age by his writings, and that their evil influence was likely to continue even after his death. The curate, upon further examination, finding the penitent in the utmost agonies of despair, and being himself a man of learning, told him, that he hoped his case was not so desperate as he apprehended, since he found that he was so very sensi-

ble of his fault, and so sincerely repented of it. The penitent still urged the evil tendency of his book to subvert all religion, and the little ground of hope there could be for one, whose writings would continue to do mischief when his body was laid in ashes. The curate, finding no other way to comfort him, told him, "that he did well in being afflicted for the evil design with which he published his book, but that he ought to be very thankful that there was no danger of its doing any hurt; that his cause was so very bad, and his arguments so weak, that he did not apprehend any ill effects from it: in short, that he might rest satisfied, his performance could do no more mischief after his death, than it had done whilst he was living. To which he added, for his farther satisfaction, that he did not believe any, besides the author's particular friends and acquaintance, had ever been at the pains of reading it; or that any body, after his death, would ever enquire after it."

The atheistical writer, Lucretius, is reported, by two ancient authors, to have run mad, and to have killed himself.

What a blessing to mankind, in himself, and in his writings, was the ingenious, humble, and pious Mr. Boyle! What a common pest to society was the fallacious, proud, and impious Hobbes! Accordingly we find the former bade adieu to this world with the utmost serenity, honour, and hope; while the other went out of it in the dark, with an odium on his name, as well as with terrible apprehensions of an unknown future. He had been an instrument of the prince of darkness, in poisoning many young gentlemen and others with his wicked principles, as the late Earl of Rochester (heretofore mentioned) confessed with extreme grief in the hours of affliction. It is remarked by those

who critically observed the author of "The Leviathan," that though, in a humour of bravado, he would speak very strange and unbecoming things of God, yet in his study, in the dark, and in his retired thoughts, he trembled before him. What could make this strange man awake in such terror and amazement, if his candle happened to go out in the night, but that he was unable to bear the dismal reflections of his dissolute and gloomy mind, and because he neither knew how quite to extinguish, nor yet how to bear the light of conscience, that "candle of the Lord," within him? Many, alas! appear like Atheists in their mirth, in wine, and company, who are quite of other sentiments in sickness, and the gloom of solitude.

How remarkably careful the ancients were of what books they let their children read, may be seen in that amiable writer, Rollin. Valerius Maximus, in particular, informs us, that the Lacedemonians commanded the books of the poet Archilochus to be removed from their city, as judging the reading of them highly improper for their youth, and subversive of decency and good manners. Thus that wise nation held in little esteem the elegance and wit of his writings; which, however they might refine the imagination, were but too likely to hurt the mind, and contaminate the principles of their children.

On his death-bed the penitent earl of Rochester was (as we have just observed) touched with very strong compunction for the various indecencies he had diffused from his pen; accordingly, we have seen how extremely solicitous he was, if it were possible, to suppress and stifle them, as suited only to serve the cause of vice and profaneness. He ingenuously declared, "that that absurd and foolish philosophy which the world had so much ad-

mired, as propagated by the late Mr. Hobbes and others, had undone him, and many more of the best talents of the nation :” while his sense of the past, and his hearty concern for the pious education of his children, made him wish, “ that his son might never be a wit ; that is (as he himself explained it) one of those wretched creatures who pride themselves in abusing God and religion, and denying his being or his providence ; but rather that he might become an honest and religious man, which alone could render him the support and blessing of his family.”

Above all, he was remarkably hearty in his endeavours to be serviceable to those about him. On which head, we cannot pass by that most fervent and passionate exclamation of his to a gentleman of some character, who came to visit him in his last illness. “ O remember,” said he, “ that you condemn God no more ! He is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins ! will, in mercy, I hope, touch your conscience sooner or later, as he has done mine ! You and I have been friends and sinners together a great while ! therefore I am the more free with you. We have been all mistaken in our conceits and opinions : our persuasions have been false and groundless ; therefore God grant you repentance !” And seeing the same gentleman next day again, he said to him, “ perhaps you were disobliged by my plainness to you yesterday : I spake the words of truth and soberness to you ;” and (striking his hand upon his breast with great emotion) said, “ I hope God will touch your heart.”

There are, perhaps, few instances in all history that can parallel these keen convictions of an awakened mind. Dr. Young, in the celebrated work above quoted, observes,

*“ A death-bed’s a detector of the heart :
Truth is deposited with man’s last hour,
An honest hour, and faithful to her trust :
Men may live fools, but fools they cannot die.”*

Louis XIV. of France, who was not fond of books, asked Montausier, his son’s tutor, why he was always reading, and what good it did him ? “ Sire,” replied he, “ good books have the same effect upon my mind that the partridges your majesty is so good as occasionally to send me have upon my body ; they support and nourish it.”

CONVERSATION.

SENTIMENTS.

Let no corrupt communications proceed out of your mouth: but that which is good, to the use of edifying.

PLUTARCH tells us, in few words, what an infinite advantage Alexander reaped from the fine taste wherewith his preceptor Aristotle inspired him, even from his tenderest infancy. "He loved," says our author, "to converse with learned men; to improve himself in knowledge; and to study." Three sources these of a monarch's happiness, which enable him to secure himself from numberless difficulties; three certain and infallible methods of learning to reign without the assistance of others. The conversation of persons of fine sense instructs a prince, as it were, in the way of amusement; and teaches him a thousand curious and useful things without costing him the least trouble. The lessons inculcated by able masters impress and wonderfully improve, and furnish him with rules to govern his subjects with wisdom; and, in fine, study, especially that of history, crowns the whole; becomes to him a preceptor of all seasons, and for all hours; that, without growing troublesome, acquaints him with truths which no one else dare to give him; under fictitious names exhibits him to himself; and teaches him to know, to feel, and to support his own character, as well as to investigate those of mankind, who are the same in all ages.

It was Mr. Locke's peculiar art in conversation to lead people to talk of their own profession, or whatever they best understood. With a gardener he discoursed of gardening; with a jeweller, of diamonds; with a chemist, of chemistry; with a watchmaker, of clocks, watches, &c. "By this means," said he, "I please all those men who commonly can speak pertinently upon nothing else. As they believe I have an esteem for their profession, they are charmed with shewing their abilities before me; and I, in the mean time, improve myself by their discourse." By thus putting questions to artificers, he would sometimes find out a secret in their art which they did not understand themselves; and often give them views of the subject entirely new, which they put into practice with advantage. In one of his letters, speaking of the advantages of conversation, he says, "There are scarcely any two men that have perfectly the same views of the same thing, till they come with attention, and perhaps with mutual assistance, to examine it; a consideration that makes conversation with the living much more desirable than consulting the dead."

The faculty of interchanging our thoughts with one another, or what we express by conversation, has always been represented by moral writers as one of the noblest privileges of reason, and which more particularly sets mankind above the brute part of creation. Monsieur Varillas once told his friend, the author of the *Menagiana*, that out of every ten things he knew, he had learned nine in conversation. "And I too," says M. Menage, "can in a great measure declare the same."

Of all the inconveniences attending the intercourse of mankind, slander and detraction are the most frequent, and in a very high degree odious

and detestable. We are told of St. Bernard, that when he was drawing near his end, he thus solemnly addressed himself to his brethren, as a dying man bequeathing legacies to his friends: "Three things I require you to keep and observe; which I remember to have kept to the best of my power, as long as I lived. 1. I have not willed to slander any person; and if any have fallen, I have hid as much as possible. 2. I have ever trusted less to my own wit and understanding than to any other's. 3. If I were at any time hurt, harmed, or annoyed, I never wished vengeance against the party who so wronged me."

It is always a certain sign of an ill heart, to be inclined to defamation. This temper has ever been in the highest degree odious to gallant spirits, and ought to be scouted from every society of men. The Persian soldier, who was overheard reviling Alexander the Great, was well admonished by his officer in these memorable words: "Sir, you are paid to fight against Alexander, and not to rail at him."

EXAMPLES.

Cicero, in one of his pleadings, defending his client from general scandal, says very handsomely, and with much reason, "There are many who have particular engagements to the prosecutor; there are many who are known to have ill will to him for whom I appear; there are many who are naturally addicted to defamation, and envious of any good to any man, who may have contributed to spread reports of this kind; for nothing is so swift as scandal; nothing is more easily sent abroad; nothing received with more welcome; nothing diffuses itself so universally. I shall not

desire, that if any report to our disadvantage has any ground for it, you would overlook or extenuate it; but if there be any thing advanced without a person who can say whence he had it, or which is attested by one who forgot who told it him, or who had it from one of so little consideration, that he did not then think it worth his notice; all such testimonies as these I know you will think too slight to have any credit against the innocence and honour of our fellow-citizen." What an admirable rule and criterion of conversation is this! When an ill report is traced, it very often vanishes among such as the orator has here recited; and how despicable a creature must that be who is in pain for what passes among so frivolous a people!

Few have more happily expressed themselves on the topic in question than Epictetus. "Consider with yourself seriously," says he, "what figure is most fit for you to make in the world; and then fix upon a method and rule in order hereunto; which be sure to observe most nicely, both at home alone, and abroad in company. At all public entertainments, and in mixed companies, keep a strict guard upon yourself, lest you be infected with rude and vulgar conversation; for know, that though a man be ever so clear himself, yet by frequenting company that are tainted, he will of necessity contract some pollution from them. Above all things, take care not to talk of other people; neither so as to censure their conduct, nor to be lavish in their commendation, nor to make invidious comparisons between one and another. In familiar conversation with your friends and acquaintance, do not make it your business to entertain the company with tedious narratives of yourself, and your own affairs. Consider that their sensations and yours are very dif-

ferent upon these occasions ; and though the exploits by which you have signalized yourself, the successes you have obtained, the dangers you have encountered, or the afflictions you have undergone, may be a very agreeable story to yourself to tell, yet it will not be equally so for others to hear. As little will it become you to render yourself the common buffoon, and be always trying to make the company laugh, for this is a very nice and ticklish thing, exceedingly apt to degenerate into vice and folly ; and, observe it when you will, he that only studies men's diversion, shall be sure at the same time to lose their respect. Of all kinds of discourse, none is more unsafe, none more despicable, than that which breaks in upon modesty and good manners : whenever, therefore, any person in your presence flies out into obscenity, if so great a liberty can decently be taken, reprove him publicly, and put a stop to the lewd talk. But, if that cannot conveniently be done, do yourself the justice to disapprove it : and, by forbearing to join with him, by blushing for him, and by chiding looks, let all the company see plainly that you detest his filthy ribaldry."

Eusebius was a man of sense, politeness, and of unaffected piety ; it often shocked him to find, in the common intercourse of life, that Christians, to whom our Saviour has said, "Swear not at all," assumed a liberty of swearing by all things. A thousand good qualities in a person made no atonement in his opinion for this only bad one, and though he pitied those failures that savoured of weakness, he never gave quarter to blasphemy. "Other vices," said he, "make bold with God's commands ; this outrages his very person ; it adds insult to disobedience, and contempt to abuse : it is a symptom of absolute irreligion. For who will

revile the very Being he adores, or rally and worship the same object? And what respect, satisfaction, or credit, can we expect to derive from him who turns upon his Creator, and flies in the face of the Omnipotent?"

Neander was an excellent soldier; he feared nothing but fear; he always chose the van, and was often the first man on the breach. All admired his courage, and praised it; and even those who disapproved his conduct, did justice to his valour. This gentleman, however, unfortunately, managed it so as to lose at the table the glory he won in the field; and by talking away in his winter-quarters, dissipated the honour he had purchased in the whole campaign. In short, he was a most insufferable egotist. "I did this," said he, "at the siege of R——, and this at the battle of D——. Had I not seized on such a post at ***, the army had been in danger. One would have thought all the generals and soldiers had been in garrison, and that Neander, with his small brigade alone, had defeated the designs of the French. This overgrown vanity cost him dear; instead of gaining the reputation of a general, he went off with that of a fop; and all concluded that he was too ambitious of praise to deserve any. Deep rivers move with a silent majesty; shallow brooks alone make a noise and tumult among the pebbles. The great Marshal de Turenne never spoke of himself but when forced, and even then with modesty: and though the king was wholly indebted to the wise conduct of this gallant man for many victories, yet Turenne never was the man to blazon it; on the contrary, he would lay his miscarriages at his own door, and success at that of his officers and soldiers. This made him appear great even in his overthrow; and generally his

moderation was more glorious to him than victory.

Sir Richard Steele observes, that there are some men who upon all occasions, and in all companies, talk in the same circle and round of chat as they have picked up in their daily peregrinations. "I remember," says he, "at a full table in the city, one of these ubiquitary wits was entertaining the company with a soliloquy (for so I call it when a man talks to those who do not understand him) concerning wit and humour. An honest gentleman who sat next to me, and was worth half a plum, stared at him, and, observing there was some sense, as he thought, mixed with his impertinence, whispered me, "Take my word for it, this fellow is more knave than fool." This was all my good friend's applause of the wittiest man of talk that I was ever present with; which wanted nothing to make it excellent, but that there was no occasion for it.

The same ingenious author has the following remarks on loquacity. "I look upon a tedious talker, or what is generally known by the name of a story-teller," to be much more insufferable than even a prolix writer. An author may be tossed out of your hand, and thrown aside when he grows dull and tiresome; but such liberties are so far from being allowed towards these orators in common conversation, that I have known a challenge sent a person for going out of the room abruptly, and leaving a man of honour in the midst of a dissertation. The life of a man is too short for a story-teller. Methusalem might be half an hour in telling what o'clock it was: but for us post-diluvians, we ought to do every thing in haste; and in our speeches, as well as actions, remember that our time is short. I would establish but one great general rule to be observed in all conversation;

which is this, "That men should not talk to please themselves, but those that hear them." This would make them consider whether what they speak be worth hearing; whether there be either wit or sense in what they are about to say; and whether it be adapted to the time when, the place where, and the person to whom it is spoken.

A certain celebrated nobleman, speaking of another, remarkable in conversation for his loquacity and manner of address, observed, "that he was always too big for his company." This fault is not a whit the less unpardonable for being so very common: it is neither good-natured, nor just, nor decent; but the certain mark of a deficient judgment. Good-nature is more agreeable in conversation than wit, and gives a certain air to the countenance, which is more amiable than beauty. It shows virtue in the fairest light, takes off in some measure from the deformity of vice, and makes even folly and impertinence supportable.

Zeno, the philosopher, being present when a person of a loquacious disposition played himself off, said, with an air of concern in his countenance, "I perceive that poor gentleman is ill. He has a violent flux upon him." The company was alarmed, and the rhetorician stopped in his career. "Yes," added Zeno, "the flux is so violent, that it has carried his ears into his tongue."

The significance and importance of frivolous, trifling conversation, was smartly represented by a philosopher; who, being asked how he left the company employed, made answer, "some in milking the ram, others in holding the pail;" intimating thereby, that they were to the full as unprofitably employed.

Of the great Lord Bacon's mode of regulating

the conversation at his table, Mr. Seward has recorded, (from an almost forgotten author) the following particulars: "He never took a pride," as is the humour of some, "in putting any of his guests, or those that discoursed with him, to the blush, but was ever ready to countenance their abilities, whatever they were. Neither was he one that would appropriate the discourse to himself alone, but left a liberty to the rest to speak in their turns; and he took pleasure to hear a man speak in his own faculty, and would draw him on and allure him to discourse upon different subjects: and for himself, he despised no man's observations, but would light his torch at any man's candle." Again, Mr. Osborn, who knew Lord Bacon personally, in his "Advice to his Son," thus describes him: "Lord Bacon, Earl of St. Albans, in all companies did appear a good proficient (if not a master) in those arts entertained for the subject of every one's discourse; so as I dare maintain, without the least affectation of flattery or hyperbole, that his most casual talk deserveth to be written, as I have been told that his first or foulest copies required no great labour to render them competent for the nicest judgments: a high perfection, attainable only by use, and treating with every man in his respective profession, and what he was most versed in. So as I have heard him entertain a country lord in the proper terms relating to hawks and dogs, and at another time outcant a London chirurgeon. Thus he did not only learn himself, but gratify such as taught him, who looked upon their callings as honourable through his notice. Nor did an easy falling into arguments (not unjustly taken for a blemish in the most) appear less than an ornament in him; the ears of the hearers receiving more gratification

than trouble, and (so) no less sorry when he came to conclude, than displeased with any that did interrupt him. Now this general knowledge he had in all things, husbanded by his wit, and dignified by so majestical a carriage he was known to own, struck such an awful reverence in those he questioned, that they durst not conceal the most intrinsic part of their mysteries from him, for fear of appearing ignorant or saucy ; all which rendered him no less necessary than admirable at the council table, where, in reference to impositions, monopolies, &c. the meanest manufactures were an usual argument, and (as I have heard) did in this baffle the Earl of Middlesex, that was born and bred a citizen, &c. yet without any great (if at all) interrupting his other studies, as is not hard to be imagined of a quick apprehension, in which he was admirable."

DUELLING.

SENTIMENT.

*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood
be shed.*

PERHAPS there is not any word in the English language less understood than HONOUR, and but few that might not have been equally mistaken, without producing equal mischief. Honour is both a motive and an end. As "a principle of action," it differs from virtue only in degree, and therefore necessarily includes it, as generosity includes justice; and, as "a reward," it can be deserved only by those actions which no other principle can produce. To say of another, "That he is a man of honour," is at once to attribute the principle, and to confer the reward: but in the common acceptation of the word, HONOUR, as a principle, does not include virtue; and therefore, as a reward, is frequently bestowed upon vice. Hence (such is the blindness and vassalage of human reason) men are discouraged from virtue by the fear of shame, and incited to vice by the hope of honour. Honour, indeed, is always claimed in specious terms; but the facts, upon which the claim is founded, are often flagitiously wicked. Lothario arrogates the character of "a Man of Honour," for having defended a lady who had put herself under his protection from insult, at the risk of life; and Aleator, for fulfilling an engagement, to which the law would not have obliged

him at the expence of liberty. But the champion of the lady had first seduced her to adultery, and to preserve her from the resentment of her husband, had killed him in a duel; and the martyr to his promise had paid a sum, which would have discharged the bill of a tradesman, to a gamester of quality, who had given him credit at cards! Such, in the common opinion, are "Men of Honour;" and he who, in certain circumstances, should abstain from murder, perfidy, or ingratitude, would be avoided, as reflecting infamy upon his company. Honour, as a principle, is the refinement of virtue; as an end, it is the splendor of reputation, the reward of such virtue: and the true man of honour is he, who, from the native excellence and real dignity of justice, goodness, and truth, is led to act at all times consistently with them; ever reverencing his conscience and his character, and solicitous to fill up the great, the worthy part, far above the narrow restraint and coercion of the laws, or the fallible testimony of mere human judgment. And can it be supposed that a principle like this can ever allow, can ever justify, the hazarding our own, or taking away the life of a brother, for a slight, nay, for the greatest affront imaginable? Can it be supposed that a principle like this can ever give rise to duels, or attain its great end and reward, a splendid reputation, in consequence of them? Men, instigated by the meanest passions, with revenge and guilt boiling in their hearts, preparing, by the pistol or the sword, to finish each other's short and precarious existence; and to plunge the one, with all his vices blossoming upon him, into awful eternity: the other to drag the miserable remains of life, haunted with the distracting consciousness of his brother's, his friends, perhaps

his once dearest friends' murder upon his soul.— Perhaps he lives the sole hope and stay of some ancient and venerable house ; and, after all the labour and anxiety of youthful education is past, is advancing on the great theatre of the world, the delight of his friends, and the solicitous expectation of his affectionate parents, who, in the decline of life, see with transport their youth renewed, and the hopes and honour of their family re flourishing in their beloved son.

But dearer, tenderer ties still remain, to twine about the heart, to touch it with the keenest sensibility, and to preserve it from the seducing calls of false honour and romantic bravery. If thou wilt needs engage in the desperate duel, see, on one side, to unnerve thy wretched arm—honour, reason, humanity, religion, disavowing the deed ; and from what source then shall courage spring ? And, on the other side, see the faithful and beloved partner of thy bed, with streaming eyes, and anguish too great for utterance, pointing to the little pledges of your mutual affection, and with dumb, but expressive oratory, bewailing her widowed, and their orphan state !

EXAMPLES.

Eugenio, in consequence of a quarrel with the illiberal and brutish Ventusus, received a challenge from the latter, which he answered by the following billet : “ Sir, your behaviour last night has convinced me that you are a scoundrel ; and your letter this morning that you are a fool. If I should accept your challenge, I should myself be both. I owe a duty to God and my country, which I deem it infamous to violate ; and I am intrusted with a life, which I think cannot, with-

out folly, be staked against yours. I believe you have ruined, but you cannot degrade me. You may possibly, while you sneer over this letter, secretly exult in your own safety ; but remember, that to prevent assassination, I have a sword ; and to chastise insolence a cane."

Forgiveness of injuries and a merciful disposition towards those who have offended us, is not only an infallible mark of a great and noble mind, but it is our indispensable duty as reasonable creatures, and peculiarly so as Christians. The following is a fine example of this virtue : Gaston, Marquis de Renty, an illustrious nobleman, was a soldier and a Christian ; and had the peculiar felicity to reconcile the seeming opposition between those characters. He had a command in the French army, and had the misfortune to receive a challenge from a person of distinction in the same service. The marquis returned for answer, that he was ready to convince the gentleman that he was in the wrong ; or, if he could not convince him, was as ready to ask his pardon. The other, not satisfied with this reply, insisted upon his meeting him with the sword ; to which the marquis sent this answer : that he was resolved not to do it, since God and his king had forbidden it ; otherwise, he would have him know, that all the endeavours he had used to pacify him did not proceed from any fear of him, but of Almighty God, and his displeasure : that he should go every day about his usual business, and, if he did assault him, he would make him repent it. The angry man, not able to provoke the marquis to a duel, and meeting him one day by chance, drew his sword and attacked him : the marquis soon wounded and disarmed both him and his second, with the assistance of a servant who attended him. But

then did this truly Christian nobleman show the difference between a brutish and a Christian courage ; for leading them to his tent, he refreshed them with wine and cordials, caused their wounds to be dressed, and their swords to be restored to them ; then dismissed them with Christian and friendly advice ; and was never heard to mention the affair afterwards even to his nearest friends. It was a usual saying with this great man, “ that there was more true courage and generosity in bearing and forgiving an injury, for the love of God, than in requiting it with another : in suffering, rather than revenging ; because the thing was really more difficult : adding, that bulls and bears had courage enough, but it was a brutal courage ; whereas that of men should be such as became rational beings and Christians.”

A quarrel having arisen between a celebrated gentleman in the literary world and one of his acquaintance, the latter heroically, and no less laconically, concluded a letter to the former, on the subject of the dispute, with, “ I have a life at your service, if you dare to take it.” To which the other replied, “ You say you have a life at my service if I dare to take it. I must confess to you, that I dare not take it : I thank my God, that I have not the courage to take it. But though I own that I am afraid to deprive you of your life, yet, Sir, permit me to assure you, that I am equally thankful to the Almighty Being, for mercifully bestowing on me sufficient resolution, if attacked, to defend my own.” This unexpected kind of reply had the proper effect : it brought the madman back again to reason ; friends interfered, and the affair was compromised.

Myrtle, a character in Steele’s “ Conscious Lovers,” delivers the following just sentiments on this

subject: "How many friends have died by the hands of friends, for the want of temper! There is nothing manly but what is conducted by reason, and agreeable to the practice of virtue and justice; and yet how many have been sacrificed to that idol, the unreasonable opinion of man!

*"Betray'd by honour, and compell'd by shame,
They hazard being to preserve a name."*

Sir Walter Raleigh, a man of known courage and honour, being very injuriously treated by a hot-headed, rash youth, who next proceeded to challenge him, and, on his refusal, spit upon him, and that, too, in public; the knight, taking out his handkerchief, with great calmness made him only this reply: "Young man, if I could as easily wipe your blood from my conscience, as I can this injury from my face, I would this moment take away your life." The consequence was, that the youth, struck with a sudden and strong sense of his misbehaviour, fell upon his knees, and begged forgiveness.

The Turks, we are assured, suffer no such things as duels in their dominions. Busbequius tells us of a reproof given to a valiant man, by a bashaw of Constantinople, for boasting that he had challenged his enemy, which is well worth the notice of every thinking Christian. "How durst thou," said he, "challenge thy fellow-creature to a duel? What! was there not a Christian to fight with? Do not both of you eat the emperor's bread? And yet, forsooth, you must go about to take away each other's lives! What precedent had you for this? Do not you know, that whoever of the twain had died, the emperor had lost a subject?" Saying this, the challenger was immediately ordered to

prison, where he lay pining many months, and was at last with difficulty released, and even then with the loss of his reputation.

When any matter of difference had fallen out in Macedon, betwixt two persons who were notoriously men of a turbulent and contentious temper, it was brought before King Philip, that he might determine it at his pleasure; who is reported to have generally passed this exemplary sentence upon them: "You," said he to the one, "I command immediately to run out of Macedon; and you," turning to the other, "see that you make all imaginary haste after him:" thus banishing them, as pests, from the capital. "A good rid-dance," says our author, "of such salamanders as delight to live in the fire of contention; commencing sharp quarrels upon trivial accounts, and, withal, knowing no time wherein to end them."

It is no uncommon thing, with persons of duelling propensity, to make a very liberal, but inexplicable, use of the term "Satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honour, where he happened to be very ill treated. One of the company, being conscious of his offence, sent a note to him the next morning, telling him he was ready to give him satisfaction. "Why surely, now," says the plain, honest man, "this is fine doing: last night he sent me away very much out of temper; and this morning he fancies it would be a satisfaction to me to be run through the body!"

The ancient Greeks and Romans never wore swords but in war; neither were any duels ever fought amongst them. If they challenged one another, it was either a contest between rival princes, and to prevent a greater effusion of blood; or else

it was singly to fight against the enemies of their country. Cæsar has given us a remarkable instance of this kind of challenge, in his excellent Commentaries. Two centurions of high rank, T. Pulvio and L. Varenus, having with great animosity long contested which was the braver man, or most worthy of preferment, and being present at Cæsar's camp when assaulted by the Gauls, the former, in the heat of the attack, called aloud to the latter, in these words : why should you remain in doubt, Varenus ? What fairer opportunity can you desire for the proof of your valour ?—This, this shall be the day, to decide our controversies." Immediately on this spirited call, Pulvio went out of the camp and rushed upon the enemy. Varenus followed his rival, who, with his javelin, slew the first of the Gauls that engaged him ; but being attacked by a shower of darts, one of them pierced his shield, and stuck after such a manner in his belt, as prevented him from drawing his sword. The enemy presently surrounded him, thus encumbered and unable to defend himself. At this instant, Varenus came up to his assistance, slew one, and drove the rest before him ; but pursuing them too eagerly, he stepped into a hole, and fell down. Pulvio, who had now disencumbered himself from the dart, and drawn his sword, came very seasonably to the rescue of Varenus ; with whom, after having slain many of the Gauls, he returned with safety and glory to the camp. Thus the Romans, we see, did not, in their private quarrels, sheath their swords in each other's breasts ; contests of valour among them were only calls and incitements to the exertion of public and patriotic deeds.

It is reported of the famous Viscount de Turenne, that, when he was a young officer, and at the siege of a fortified town, he had no less than

twelve challenges sent him, all of which he put in his pocket, without farther notice : but being soon after commanded upon a desperate attack on some part of the fortifications, he sent a billet to each of the challengers, acquainting them that he had received their papers, which he deferred answering till a proper occasion offered, both for them and himself, to exert their courage for the king's service : that being ordered to assault the enemy's works the next day, he desired their company ; when they would have an opportunity of signaling their own bravery, and of being witnesses of his. We may leave the reader to determine, in this case, who acted most like a man of sense, of temper, and of true courage.

When Augustus Cæsar received a challenge from Mark Antony, in his decline of fortune, to engage him in single combat, he very calmly answered the bearer of the message, " If Antony is weary of his life, tell him, there are other ways of death besides the point of my sword ! " Now, who ever deemed this an instance of cowardice ? All ages have admired it as the act of a discreet and gallant man ; who sensible of his own importance, knew how to treat the petulant and vindictive humour of a discontented adversary with its deserved contempt.

The following story, told by Mr. Seward, in his " Anecdotes," places duelling in a truly ridiculous light, and is too humorous to be omitted in this work, in which it is our wish, at the same time, to amuse and to instruct : " General Guise, going over one campaign to Flanders, observed a young raw officer, who was in the same vessel with him ; and, with his usual humanity, told him that he would take care of him, and conduct him to Antwerp, where they were both going ; which he ac-

cordingly did, and then took leave of him. The young fellow was soon told, by some arch rogues, whom he happened to fall in with, that he must signalize himself by fighting some man of known courage, or else he would soon be despised in the regiment. The young man said he knew no one but Colonel Guise, and he had received great obligations from him. It was all one for that, they said, in these cases; the colonel was the fittest man in the world, as every man knew his bravery. Soon afterwards, up comes the young officer to Colonel Guise, as he was walking up and down in the coffee house, and began, in a hesitating manner, to tell him how much obliged he had been to him, and how sensible he was of his obligations. "Sir," replied Colonel Guise, "I have done my duty by you, and no more." "But, Colonel," added the young officer, faltering, "I am told that I must fight some gentleman of known courage, and who has killed several persons; and that nobody—" "Oh, Sir," replied the colonel, "your friends do me too much honour; but there is a gentleman," pointing to a fierce-looking, black fellow, that was sitting at one of the tables, "who has *killed half the regiment.*" So up goes the officer to him, and tells him he is well informed of his bravery, and that, for that reason, he must fight him. "Who, I, Sir?" replied the gentleman: "Why, I am *Peal, the Apothecary.*"

ON ENVY.

SENTIMENTS.

He who filches from me my good name, enriches not himself, but makes me poor indeed.

ENVY is almost the only vice which is practicable at all times, and in every place; the only passion which can never lie quiet for want of irritation; its effects are therefore every where discoverable, and its attempts always to be dreaded.

It is impossible to mention a name, which any advantageous distinction has made eminent, but some latent animosity will burst out. The wealthy trader will never want those, who hint, with Shylock, that ships are but boards, and that no man can properly be termed rich, whose fortune is at the mercy of the winds. The beauty provokes, whenever she appears, a thousand murmurs of detraction and whispers of suspicion. The genius suffers persecution from innumerable critics, whose acrimony is excited merely by the pain of seeing others pleased, of hearing applauses which another enjoys.

The frequency of envy makes it so familiar, that it escapes our notice; nor do we often reflect upon its turpitude or malignity, till we happen to feel its influence. When he that has given no provocation to malice, but, by attempting to excel in some useful art, finds himself pursued by multitudes whom he never saw with implacability of personal resentment; when he perceives cla-

mour and malice let loose upon him as a public enemy, and incited by every stratagem of defamation; when he hears the misfortunes of his family, or the follies of his youth, exposed to the world; and every failure of conduct, or defect of nature, aggravated and ridiculed; he then learns to abhor those artifices, at which he only laughed before, and discovers how much the happiness of life would be advanced, by the eradication of envy from the human heart.

It is above all other vices, inconsistent with the character of a social being, because it sacrifices truth and kindness to very weak temptations. He that plunders a wealthy neighbour, gains as much as he takes away, and improves his own condition in the same proportion as he impairs another's; but he that blasts a flourishing reputation, must be content with a small dividend of additional fame; so small, as can afford very little consolation to balance the guilt by which it is obtained.

Plutarch compares envious persons to cupping-glasses, which ever draw the worst humours of the body to them: they are like flies, which resort only to the raw and corrupt parts of the body; or, if they light on a sound part, never leave blowing upon it till they have disposed it to putrefaction. When Momus could find no fault with the face in the picture of Venus, he picked a quarrel with her slippers: and so these malevolent persons, when they cannot blame the substance, will yet represent the circumstance of men's best actions with prejudice. This black shadow is still observed to wait upon those that have been the most illustrious for virtue, or remarkable for some kind of perfection: and to excel in either has been made an unpardonable crime.

EXAMPLES.

Mutius, a citizen of Rome, was noted to be of such an envious and malevolent disposition, that Publius one day, observing him to be very sad, said, "Either some great evil has happened to Mutius, or some great good to another."

"Dionysius, the tyrant," says Plutarch, "out of envy punished Philoxenus, the musician, because he could sing; and Plato, the philosopher, because he could dispute better than himself."

In the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, there was a portico at Rome that bowed outwards on one side very much. A certain architect undertook to set it right and straight; he underpropped it every way on the upper part, and bound it about with thick cloths, and the skins and fleeces of sheep; and then, with the help of many engines, and a multitude of hands, he restored it to its former uprightness, contrary to the opinion of all men. Tiberius admired the fact, and envied the man; so that, though he gave him money, he forbade his name to be inserted in the annals, and afterwards banished him the city. This famous artificer afterwards presented himself in the presence of Tiberius, with a glass he had privily about him; and while he implored the pardon of Tiberius, he threw the glass against the ground; which was bruised, and crushed together, but not broke, and which he readily put into its first form: hoping, by this act, to have gained his good favour and grace. But Tiberius's envy still encreased, so that he caused him to be slain: adding, that if this art of malleable glass should be practised, it would make gold and silver but cheap and inconsiderable things. Nor would he suffer his name to be put in the records.

Maximianus the tyrant, through envy of the honours conferred on Constantine, and the virtues attributed to him by the people, contrived all that a desperate envy could invent, and a great virtue surmount. He first made him general of an army, which he sent against the Sarmatians, supposing he would there lose his life. The young prince went thither, returned victorious, leading along with him the barbarian king in chains. On his return from this battle, the tyrant engaged him in a perilous encounter with a lion which he purposely had caused to be let loose upon him. But Constantine, victorious over lions as well as men, slew him with his own hand, and impressed an incomparable opinion in the minds of his soldiers, which easily gave him a passage to the throne, by the same degrees and means which were prepared for his ruin.

Narses the eunuch was of the bed-chamber to Justinus the emperor; and, from a seller of paper and books, arrived to the honour of succeeding the famous Belisarius, in the place of generalissimo. After he had distinguished himself by a thousand gallant actions, at last, through envy, or his ill fortune, or the accusation of the people, he fell under the hatred of the emperor Justinus and his empress, insomuch that the emperor sent him letters full of disgrace and reproach, advising him to return to the spindle and distaff. Narses was so incensed at this, that he swore he would weave them such a web as they should not easily undo again: and, thereupon, to revenge the injury he conceived to be done him, he called in the Lombards to the invasion of the Roman territories, (which they had been long desirous of, but had hitherto been restrained by himself), and was the occasion of many miseries.

Alexander the Great, being recovered of a wound he had received, made a great feast for his friends ; amongst whom was Coragus, a Macedonian, a man of great strength, and renowned for his valour ; who, being heated with wine, challenged Dioxippus, the Athenian, a wrestler, and who had been crowned for many victories. It was accepted, and the king himself appointed the day. Many thousands were met, and the two champions came to the place : Alexander himself, and the Macedonians, with their countryman ; and the Grecians with their Dioxippus, naked and armed only with a club. Coragus, armed at all points, being at some distance from his enemy, threw a javelin at him, which the other nimbly declined ; then he sought to wound him with a long spear, which the other broke in pieces with his club : hereupon he drew his sword ; but his nimble and strong adversary leaped upon him, threw him to the ground, set his foot upon his neck, advanced his club, and looked on the spectators, as enquiring if he should strike ; when Alexander commanded to spare him : so the day ended with great glory to Dioxippus. But the king departed, and, from that day forward, his mind was alienated from the victor. He fell also into the envy of the court, and all the Macedonians ; who, at the feast, privily put a gold cup under his seat, made a feigned and public enquiry after it, and then pretended to find it with him : a concourse was about him, and the man, afflicted with shame, departed. When he came to his inn, he sent a letter to Alexander, by his friends, wherein he related his innocency, and shewed the envious villany that had been used to him ; and that done, he slew himself. Alexander, upon notice of it, lamented him dead, whom he himself, as well as others, had envied while alive.

When Richard the First and Philip of France were fellow-soldiers together, at the siege of Acon, in the Holy Land, and Richard had approved himself to be the more valiant man, insomuch that all men's eyes were fixed upon him, it so galled the heart of King Philip, that he was scarcely able to bear the glory of Richard, but cavilled at all his proceedings, and fell at length to open defiance : nor could he contain any longer ; but out of very envy, hasting home, he invaded his territories, and proclaimed open war.

When Aristides, so remarkable for his inviolable attachment to justice, was tried by the people at Athens, and condemned to banishment, a peasant, who was unacquainted with the person of Aristides, applied to him to vote against Aristides, "Has he done you any wrong," said Aristides, "that you are for punishing him in this manner?" "No," replied the countryman : "I don't even know him ; but I am tired and angry with hearing every one call him *the just*."

EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

SENTIMENTS.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise; which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

EPICETUS has a fine chapter to inculcate the improvement of our time and talents. "Remember," says he, "that the world is a theatre, and that your part in this drama of life is determined by the poet. Upon him it must depend, whether you shall act a long or short one; whether your character shall be high or low. If, therefore, he assign to you that of a beggar, take care to fill it well; if a cripple, or a prince, or a private obscure man, or whatever it be, make the best of it. For consider, that the acting of the part assigned you commendably, depends upon yourself; this is your business; but the giving out of the parts, and choosing the actors, is not your's, but another's province.

To be idle and unemployed, is a sign not only of a weak head, but of a bad heart. And as it is one vile abuse of time, which is given us for action, and action of the utmost moment, so it is one sure method to lead us to other and worse abuses. For he who is idle, and wholly unoccupied, will, ere long, without question, be occupied in mischief. You must, therefore, take care that you

employ your time ; but then you must take as much care to employ it innocently : and by innocent employment is meant all the proper duties of your station, and all those inoffensive and short relaxations, which are necessary either to the health of your bodies or to the enlivening and invigorating your minds. You must be anxious to employ it in the best and noblest uses, in subserviency to your own eternal welfare ; that is, with a constant eye to the glory of God, and the good of mankind ; for herein consists our duty, and for this end was all our time given us.

EXAMPLES.

“ We all complain of the shortness of time,” says Seneca, “ and yet have much more than we know what to do with. Our lives are either spent in doing nothing at all, or in doing nothing to the purpose, or in doing nothing that we ought to do. We are always complaining that our days are few, and acting as though there would be no end of them.” In short, that noble philosopher has described our inconsistency with ourselves, in this particular, by all those various turns of expression, and thought which are peculiar to his writings.

It was a memorable practice of Vespasian, the Roman emperor, throughout the course of his whole life : he calls himself to an account every night for the actions of the past day ; and as often as he found he had slipped any one day without doing some good, he entered upon his diary this memorandum, “ *Diem perdidit* : I have lost a day.”

The excellent education which the younger Scipio had received, under his father Paulus Æmi-

lius, and from the instructions of Polybius, perfectly qualified him to fill his vacant hours with advantage, and afterwards to support the leisure of a retired life with pleasure and dignity. "Nobody," says a valuable historian, "knew better how to mingle leisure and action, nor to employ the intervals of public business with more elegance and taste. Divided between arms and the muses, between the military labours of the camp and the peaceful speculations of the closet, he either exercised his body in the perilous fatigues of war, or his mind in the study of the sciences." His predecessor, (and grandfather by adoption,) the illustrious Scipio Africanus, used to say, "that he was never less idle, than when he was entirely at leisure; nor less alone than when he was wholly by himself:" a very uncommon turn of mind in those who have been accustomed to the hurry of business, who too generally sink, at every interval of leisure, into a kind of melancholy nausea, and a listless disgust for every thing about them.

Alfred the Great was one of the wisest, the best, and most beneficent monarchs that ever swayed the sceptre of this realm; and his example is highly memorable. "Every hour of his life had its peculiar business assigned it. He divided the day and night into three portions of eight hours each; and, though much afflicted with a very painful disorder assigned only eight hours to sleep, meals, and exercise; devoting the remaining sixteen, one half to reading, writing, and prayer, and the other to public business;" so sensible was this great man that time was not a trifle to be dissipated, but a rich talent entrusted to him, and for which he was accountable to the great dispenser of it.

We are told of Queen Elizabeth, that, except when engaged by public or domestic affairs, and the exercises necessary for the preservation of her health and spirits, she was always employed in either reading or writing, in translating from other authors, or in compositions of her own; and that notwithstanding she spent much of her time in reading the best authors of her own and former ages, yet she by no means neglected that best of books, the bible; for proof of which, take her own words: "I walk," says she, "many times in the pleasant fields of the Holy Scriptures, where I plucke up the goodlisome herbes of sentences by pruneing; eat them by reading; digest them by musing; and laie them up at length in the hie seate of memory, by gathering them together; that so having tasted their sweetness, I may the less perceive the bitterness of life."

Gassendi, the celebrated philosopher, was, perhaps, one of the hardiest students that ever existed. In general, he rose at three o'clock in the morning, and read or wrote till eleven, when he received the visits of his friends. He afterwards, at twelve, made a very slender dinner, at which he drank nothing but water, and sat down to his books again at three. There he remained till eight o'clock, when, after having eaten a very light supper, he retired to bed at ten o'clock. Gassendi was a great repeater of verses in the several languages with which he was conversant. He made it a rule every day to repeat six hundred. He could repeat six thousand Latin verses, besides all Lucretius, which he had by heart. He used to say, "that it is with the memory as with all other habits. Do you wish to strengthen it, or prevent its being enfeebled, as it generally happens when a man is growing old, exercise it continually, and

in very early life get as many fine verses by heart as you can : they amuse the mind, and keep it in a certain degree of elevation, that inspires dignity and grandeur of sentiment." The principles of moral conduct that he laid down for the direction of his life, were to know and fear God : not to be afraid of death : and to submit quietly to it when ever it should happen : to avoid idle hopes, as well as idle fears ; not to defer, till to-morrow, any innocent amusement that may take place to-day : to desire nothing but what is necessary : to govern the passions by reason and good sense.

When Socrates, in Plato's *Phædo*, has proved the immortality of the soul, he considers it as a necessary consequence of the belief thereof, " that we should be employed in the culture of our minds : in such care of them as shall not only regard that term to which we give the name of life, but also the whole which follows it ; in making ourselves as wise and good as may be : since on it our safety entirely depends ; the soul carrying hence nothing with it but its good or bad actions, its virtues or vices ; and these constitute its happiness or misery to all eternity." How might many a Christian red- den to think that this is the language of a Pagan mind ; a mind unenlightened with the bright splendours of gospel truth, and equally ignorant of a Saviour's merits, and of a Saviour's example !

Seneca, in his letters to Lucilius, assures him that there was not a day in which he did not either write something, or read and epitomize some good author : and Pliny, in like manner, giving an account of the various methods he used to fill up every vacancy of time, after several employments which he enumerates, observes, " Sometimes I hunt ; but even then I carry with me a pocket-book that, while my servants are busied in dis-

posing the nets and other matters, I may be employed in something that may be useful to me in my studies; and that, if I miss my game, I may at least bring home some of my thoughts with me, and not have the mortification of having caught nothing.

Augustus Cæsar, a few moments before his death, asked his friends, who stood by him, if they thought he had acted his part well; and upon receiving such an answer as was due to his merit, "Let me then," said he, "go off the stage with your applause;" using the expression with which the Roman actors made the exit at the conclusion of a dramatic piece.

"Among the Indians," says Apuleius, "there is an excellent set of men, called Gymnosophists. These I greatly admire; though not as skilled in propagating the vine, or in the arts of grafting or agriculture. They apply not themselves to till the ground, to search after gold, to break the horse, to tame the bull, to shear or feed sheep or goats. What is it, then, that engages them? One thing preferable to all these. Wisdom is the pursuit, as well of the old men, the teachers, as of the young, their disciples. Nor is there any thing among them that I do so much praise, as their aversion to sloth and idleness. When the tables are overspread, before the meat is set on them, all the youths, assembling to their meal, are asked by their masters, in what useful task they have been employed in from sun-rise to that time? One represents himself as having been an arbitrator, and succeeded by his prudent management in composing a difference; in making those friends who were at variance. A second had been paying obedience to his parents' commands. A third had made some discovery by his own application,

or learnt something by another's instruction. The rest gave an account of themselves in the same way. He who has done nothing to deserve a dinner, is turned out of doors without one, and obliged to work, while the others enjoy the fruits of their application.

How beautifully simple, yet forcible, is the following account of the futility of those merely sensual pursuits, which have occupied the time and attention of those we have been accustomed to call the Great! In the book of Maccabees, we read, that "Alexander, son of Philip the Macedonian, made many wars, took many strong holds, went through the ends of the earth, took spoils of many nations: the earth was quiet before him. After these things, he fell sick, and perceived that he should die."

FRIENDSHIP.

SENTIMENT.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

FRIENDSHIP is that peculiar relation which is formed by a consent and harmony of minds, by mutual esteem, and reciprocal tenderness and affection. Friendship is to be considered as a rare and singular blessing, vouchsafed, perhaps, to few ; but, when vouchsafed, one of the most exquisite cordials in human life. Multitudes are unqualified for a constant and warm friendship. Some, ardent enough in their benevolence, and defective neither in officiousness nor liberality, are mutable and uncertain ; soon attracted by new objects, disgusted without offence, and alienated without enmity. Others are soft and flexible ; easily influenced by reports and whispers ; ready to catch alarms from every dubious circumstance, and to listen to every suspicion which envy and flattery shall suggest ; to follow the opinion of every confident adviser, and move by the impulse of the last breath. Some are impatient of contradictions ; more willing to go wrong by their own judgment, than to be indebted for a better or a safer way to the sagacity of another ; inclined to consider counsel as insult, and enquiry as want of confidence ; and to confer their regard on no other terms than unreserved submission and implicit compliance. Some are dark and involved, equally careful to conceal good and bad purposes ; and

pleased with producing effects by invisible means, and showing their design only in its execution. Others are universally communicative, alike open to every lie, and equally profuse of their own secrets and those of others; without the necessary vigilance of caution, or the honest art of prudent integrity: ready to accuse without malice, and to betray without treachery. Any of these may be useful to the community, and pass through the world with the reputation of good purposes and uncorrupted morals; but they are unfit for close and tender intimacies. He cannot properly be chosen for a friend, whose kindness is exhaled by its own warmth, or frozen by the first blast of slander. He cannot be a useful counsellor who will hear no opinion but his own. He will not much invite confidence, whose principal maxim is to suspect: nor can the candour and frankness of that man be much esteemed, who spreads his arms to human kind, and makes every man, without distinction, a denizen of his bosom.

Entire friends are like two souls in one body: they can give or receive nothing; all is common between them.

The difficulty is not so great to die for a friend, as to find a friend worth dying for.

The friendship that is formed insensibly, and without professing much, is generally lasting.

He who can pride himself upon an extensive acquaintance, is incapable of true friendship. Nothing tends more to unfaithfulness, than distrust: to doubt a friend, is to lose him. Believe a man honest, and you make him so.

EXAMPLES.

At the siege of Bridgenorth Castle, in the reign

of Henry II. which was defended by Roger de Mortimer, the king exposed himself to so much danger, that he would have been slain, if a faithful vassal had not preferred his sovereign's life to his own. For, while he was busied in giving orders too near the wall, Hubert de St. Clare, constable, or governor, of Colchester Castle, who stood by his side, seeing an arrow aimed at Henry by one of Mortimer's archers, stepped before him, and received it in his own breast. The wound was mortal : he expired in the arms of his master, recommending his daughter (an only child, and an infant) to the care of that prince. It is hard to say which most deserves admiration ; a subject, who died to save his king, or a king, whose personal virtues could render his safety so dear to a subject whom he had not obliged by any extraordinary favours. The daughter of Hubert was educated by Henry, with all the affection that he owed to the memory of her father ; and, when she had attained to maturity, was honourably married to William de Longueville, a nobleman of great distinction, on condition of his taking the name of St. Clare, which the grateful Henry was desirous to perpetuate.

Monsieur Sedaine informs us, that a certain gentleman of rank lost a friend, who at his death left debts unpaid, and two children very young. The surviving friend was immediately observed to retrench his household, his equipage, and take lodgings in a small house : from whence he walked every day to the palace, followed by one footman, and performed the duties of his post. He was instantly suspected of avarice, and of bad conduct, and underwent a variety of calumnies. At the end of two years, however, he re-appeared in the world, having accumulated the sum of 20,000

livres ; which he applied to the service of his deceased friend's children, and thus rescued a worthy memory from shame, and a helpless offspring from misery and ruin. It is a pity the author had not informed us of the name of a man whose conduct is so honourable to friendship and humanity.

This heroic action recalls to mind another somewhat like it, which is recorded in history. Eudamidas of Corinth, a very poor man, drawing near his end, his mother and daughter were thereby threatened with indigence and distress. He, however, was no way alarmed at the news : but judging of the hearts of Aretæus and Charixenes, his wealthy and faithful friends, by his own, just at the point of death, he made this memorable will : “ I bequeath to Aretæus, the maintenance of my mother, and her support under old age ; and to Charixenes, I bequeath and appoint the disposal of my daughter in marriage, and giving her the best dower in his power to bestow : and in case either of my said two friends should happen to die, then I substitute the survivor to perform that which the other should have done had he lived.” This testament being read, they who knew the poverty of Eudamidas, but not his connection with the legatees, looked upon the whole matter as a piece of pleasantry, and went out laughing at the legacies assigned them. But the latter, as soon as they heard of it, immediately came, acknowledged, and solemnly ratified what was enjoined them in the will. Charixenes, however, we are informed, died within a few days after ; upon which Aretæus, his excellent successor, took upon him the two-fold charge ; kept the mother of Eudamidas with a tender and filial care ; and in due time married off the daughter of the deceased

the same day with his own daughter, and gave her an equal portion of his effects. The celebrated Nicholas Poussin's pencil has immortalized this great action; painting Eudamidas at the moment when life seems expiring, and he is dictating this memorable last will.

Eminently pleasing and heroic was the friendship of David and Jonathan: *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan*, says the plaintive and surviving David; *very pleasant hast thou been to me; thy love to me was wonderful; passing the love of women.*

The very ingenious and amiable Bishop Berkley, of Cloyne, in Ireland, was so entirely contented with his income in that diocese, that, when offered by the Earl of Chesterfield, then lord lieutenant, a bishoprick much more beneficial than that he possessed, he declined it with these words, "I love my neighbours, as they love me: why then should I begin in my old days to form new connections, and tear myself from those friends whose kindness is to me the greatest happiness I enjoy?" Acting in this instance like the celebrated Plutarch, who being asked why he resided in his native city, so obscure and so little, "I stay," said he, "lest it should grow less."

At the battle of Roucoux, in 1746, a serjeant of the regiment of Flanders, named Vidal, giving his arm to the prince of Monaco, who was wounded, in order to lead him to a place of safety, had that very arm broken to pieces by a musket ball. Without betraying the least emotion, this dauntless hero only changed his arm, saying, "Take this, my prince; the other is now good for nothing."

Psammenitus, king of Egypt, was taken prisoner by Cambyzes, and carried out of his own kingdom

into Persia. The victor, more keenly to insult and afflict their wretched parents, ordered the young princess, Psammenitus's daughter, and all the other young ladies of quality whom he had brought captive, to go dressed in the habit of slaves, carrying water upon their backs. Whilst the rest of the Egyptians were quite distracted at this spectacle, Psammenitus remained very calm, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. Soon after, Cambyzes ordered his son, the young Egyptian prince, with several of the young noblemen his companions, to be led forth tied together by the necks, and bridled like horses, with bits in their mouths. Psammenitus, upon this additional shock, was the only person who refrained from tears: but happening to espy a certain familiar friend of his go about begging, in a naked starving condition, upon calling to his friend, he burst into a flood of tears, beating his head after the manner of the barbarians. Cambyzes, hearing the singularity of his behaviour, demanded to know the reason why he remained silent and unmoved upon viewing the calamity of his children, and was all on a sudden so much afflicted at seeing the distresses of a poor old man. "Oh, son of Cyrus," answered Psammenitus, "domestic miseries, arrived to this violent height, are more grievous than to admit of tears: but to see my friend reduced from a state of ease and affluence to this extremity of distress and want, in the very verge of life, this is an object that commands my tears."

When Dean Swift was at Arthur Acheson's, at Market Hill, in the county of Armagh, an old gentleman was recommended to him, as having been a remarkable loyalist in the reigns of Charles II. James II. and William III. who had behaved with great loyalty and bravery in Scotland during

the troubles of those reigns, but was neglected by the government, although he deserved great rewards from it. As he was reduced in his circumstances, the dean made him a handsome present; but said at the same time, "This trifle, Sir, cannot support you long, and your friends may grow tired of you; therefore I would have you contrive some honest means of getting a sum of money sufficient to put you into a way of life for supporting yourself with independency in your old age."—To this Captain Creighton (for that was the gentleman's name) answered, "I have tired all my friends, and cannot expect any such extraordinary favours." "Sir," replied the dean, "I have heard much of your adventures; that they are fresh in your memory; that you can tell them with great humour; and that you have taken memoranda of them in writing." The captain answered, "I have; but no one can understand them but myself." "Well then, Sir," rejoined the dean, "get your manuscripts, read them to me, tell me none but genuine stories; and I will place them in order of time for you, prepare them for the press, and endeavour to get you a subscription among my friends, as you may do among your own." The captain soon after waited on the dean with his papers, and related to him many adventures, which the dean was so kind as to put in chronological order, to correct the style, and make a small book of them, intituled, "The Memoirs of Captain John Creighton." A subscription was immediately set on foot, by the dean's interest and recommendation, which raised to the captain above 2000*l*. and made the remaining part of his life very happy and easy.

Never perhaps was there a more sincere and elegant friendship than that which subsisted between

Scipio and Lælius. The former was one of the greatest generals and best men that Rome ever produced; the other, for his probity and prudence, was distinguished by the surname of "the Wise." They were almost of the same age, and had the same inclinations, benevolence of mind, taste for learning of all kinds, principles of government, and zeal for the public good. If Scipio took place in the point of military glory, his friend had perhaps the superiority in respect of eloquence. But let us hear Lælius himself upon so interesting a subject. "As for me, of all the gifts of nature or fortune, there are none, I think, comparable to the happiness of having Scipio for my friend. I found in our friendship a perfect conformity of sentiments, in respect to public affairs; an inexhaustible fund of counsels and supports in private life; with a tranquillity and delight not to be expressed. I never gave Scipio the least offence to my knowledge; nor ever heard a word escape him that did not please. We had but one house, and one table, at our common expense; the frugality of which was equally the taste of both. For in war, in travelling, in the country, we were always together. I do not mention our studies, and the attention of us both always to learn something. This was the employment of our leisure hours, removed from the sight and commerce of the world." Is there now any thing comparable to a friendship like that here described? "What a consolation is it," says Tully, "to have a second self, from whom we have nothing secret, and into whose heart we may pour out our own with perfect unreserve? Could we taste prosperity so sensibly, if we had no one to share with us in our joy? And what a relief is it, in adversity, to have a friend still more affected with it than ourselves!"

But what more highly exalts the value of the friendship in question was, its not being founded at all in interest, but solely in esteem for each other's virtues. "What occasion," says Lælius, "could Scipio have for me? Undoubtedly none; nor I for him. But my attachment to him was the effect of my high esteem and admiration of his virtues; and his to me arose from the favourable idea he entertained of my character and manners. This friendship increased afterwards on both sides by habit and commerce. We both indeed derived great advantages from it; but these were not our views when we began to love each other." Nothing upon earth can be so desirable as such an amity. But in vain do we seek it among the ignorant, the vain, and selfish, or men of loose and profligate principles. We must soon be ashamed of loving the man whom we cannot esteem.

His late Royal Highness Frederick, Prince of Wales, who, amongst his other great qualities, was the patron of merit, and the friend of mankind, was frequently visited by persons of distinguished abilities, with whom he contracted a strict intimacy. Among these, the late Mr. Glover (as justly celebrated for the amiableness of his character, as for his qualifications as an orator and a poet) had a considerable share in his esteem. One day the prince observed at his levee, that he had not seen the gentleman for some time, and was asking if he was well, was told that Mr. Glover was under difficulties on account of some losses in trade, which had so discouraged him, that he was ashamed to appear in his highness's presence. The prince replied, "I am sorry for it; and presenting a bank note of 500*l.* to a gentleman who stood by, added, "Carry this to Mr. Glover, as a

small testimony of my affection ; and assure him from me, that I sympathise in his affliction, and shall always be glad to see him.

In the time of the proscription by the triumvirate at Rome, a grievous punishment was denounced against any person who should conceal or any way assist the proscribed ; on the other hand, great rewards were promised to those who should discover their hiding-places. Marcus Varro, the philosopher, was in the list of persons proscribed ; at which time his dear friend Calenus tenderly received and concealed him several days in his house ; and though Antony often came thither, to walk and converse, yet was Calenus never affrighted nor changed his mind, though he daily saw other men punished or rewarded according to the purport of the sanguinary edict.

At the battle of Philippi, when Brutus, after the rout of his army, was in hazard of falling into the hands of his enemies, his bosom friend Lucillus gave him an opportunity to escape, calling out, " I am Brutus ; lead me to Antony." Being conducted to Antony, he spoke with great resolution : " I have employed this artifice," said he, " that Brutus might not fall alive into the hands of his enemies. The gods will never permit that fortune shall triumph so far over virtue. In spite of fortune, Brutus will always be found, dead or alive, in a situation worthy of his courage." Antony, admiring the firmness of Lucillus, said to him, " You merit a greater reward than it is in my power to bestow. I have just now been informed of the death of Brutus ; and, as your fidelity to him is now at an end, I beg earnestly to be received in his place ; love me as you did him ; I wish no more." Lucillus engaged himself to Antony ; and, maintaining the same fidelity to him that he had

done to Brutus, adhered to him when he was abandoned by all the world.

Damon being condemned to death by Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, obtained liberty to visit his wife and children, leaving his friend Pythias as a pledge for his return, on condition that, if he failed, Pythias should suffer in his stead. Damon not having appeared at the time appointed, the tyrant had the curiosity to visit Pythias in prison. "What a fool was you," said he, "to rely on Damon's promise! How could you imagine that he would sacrifice his life for you, or for any man?" "My lord," said Pythias, with a firm voice and noble aspect, "I would suffer a thousand deaths rather than my friend should fail in any article of honour. He cannot fail; I am confident of his virtue as of my own existence. But I beseech the gods to preserve his life. Oppose him, ye winds! disappoint his eagerness, and suffer him not to arrive till my death has saved a life of much greater consequence than mine, necessary to his lovely wife, to his little innocents, to his friends, to his country. Oh; let me not die the most cruel of deaths in that of my Damon." Dionysius was confounded and awed with the magnanimity of these sentiments. He wished to speak; he hesitated; he looked down, he retired in silence. The fatal day arrived. Pythias was brought forth; and, with an air of satisfaction, walked to the place of execution. He ascended the scaffold, and addressed the people: "My prayers are heard, the gods are propitious; the winds have been contrary; Damon could not conquer impossibilities: he will be here to-morrow, and my blood shall ransom that of my friend." As he pronounced these words, a murmur arose, a distant voice was heard; the crowd caught the words, and "Stop, stop execu-

tion!" was repeated by every person. A man came at full speed. In the same instant he was off his horse, on the scaffold, and in the arms of Pythias. "You are safe," he cried, you are safe, my friend, my beloved; the gods be praised; you are safe!" Pale, cold, and half speechless, in the arms of his Damon, Pythias replied in broken accents—"Fatal haste——cruel impatience——what envious powers have wrought impossibilities against your friend? But I will not be wholly disappointed: since I cannot die to save you, I will die to accompany you." Dionysius heard, and beheld with astonishment; his eyes were opened; his heart was touched; and he could no longer resist the power of virtue; he descended from his throne, and ascended the scaffold. "Live, live, ye incomparable pair. Ye have demonstrated the existence of virtue, and, consequently, of a God who rewards it. Live happy; live renowned; and as you have invited me by your example, form me by your precepts, to participate worthily of a friendship so divine!"

The Cardinal d'Amboise, minister to Louis XII. of France, and Archbishop of Rouen, built a magnificent palace in that city, which was finished before it was observed that it was surrounded with land that did not belong to the bishopric; and that there was no room for gardens nor offices. The proprietor of the land adjacent made an offer of it to the cardinal. And the cardinal enquiring what was his motive for selling it? "The pleasure," answered the gentleman, "of accommodating your lordship." "If you have no other motives," said the cardinal, "keep your land." "I am fond of my land," replied the gentleman; "but a neighbour has made proposals to me for my daughter, and I cannot answer his demands without selling my estate." "May you not borrow from a friend?" said the

cardinal : " frugality will enable you to make payment without selling your estate." " Ah !" replied the gentleman, " I have no friend from whom I can expect such a favour." " Have a better opinion of your friends," replied the cardinal, holding out his hand ; " Rank me among your friends, and you shall have the money." The gentleman, falling on his knees, returned his thanks by tears. The cardinal said, that he had acquired a friend, which was better than land.

After the Revolution, letters were intercepted from the Earl of Godolphin to the dethroned king. This was a crime against the state ; but not a crime to be ashamed of. The earl at the same time was a man of approved virtue. These circumstances prompted the following course. King William, in a private conference, produced the earl's letters to him ; commended his zeal for his former master, however blind it might be ; expressed a fondness to have the earl for his friend ; and at the same moment burnt the letters, that the earl might not be under any constraint. This act of generosity gained the earl's heart, and his faithful services, ever after. The circumstances here made the earl certain of the king's sincerity. At the same time, the burning of the letters, which were the only evidence against him, placed him in absolute security, and left no motive to action but gratitude alone.

Two young scholars of Eton school, one of whom was the late Lord Baltimore, went out a shooting, and were detected in that unpardonable offence by one of the masters. He came up quickly enough to one of them to discover his person ; the other, perhaps having quicker heels, got off unknown. The detected culprit was flogged pretty severely, and threatened with repetitions of the same discip-

line if he did not discover his companion. This, however, he persisted in refusing, in spite of reiterated punishment. His companion, who was confined to his room at the boarding-house by a sore throat (which he had got by leaping into a ditch to escape the detection of the master), on hearing with what severity his friend was treated on his account, went into school, with his throat wrapped up, and nobly told the master, that he was the boy that was out a shooting with the young man who, with such a magnanimous perseverance, had refused to give up his name.

Lord Stanhope was at Eton school with one of the Scots' noblemen who were condemned after the Rebellion in 1715. He requested the life of his old school-fellow (whom he had never seen since that time) of the Privy Council, while they were deliberating upon the signing of the warrant of execution of these unfortunate noblemen. His request was refused, till he threatened to give up his place, if the council did not comply with it. This menace procured him the life of his associate in early life, to whom he afterwards sent a handsome sum of money.



“ Idleness and Gaming are the ruin of Youth.”

GAMING.

SENTIMENTS.

*The strong desire shall ne'er decay,
 Who plays to win, shall win to play;
 The breast where Love had plann'd his reign
 Shall burn unquench'd with lust of gain,
 And all the charms that wit can boast
 In dreams of bitter luck be lost!
 Thus neither innocent nor gay,
 The useless hours shall fleet away:
 While Time o'erlooks the trivial strife,
 And, scoffing, shakes the sands of life.*

GAMING is pregnant with almost every evil, and the fatal source of miseries the most distressful to

man. Wealth, happiness, and every thing valuable, are too often sacrificed to it. It rends asunder the bands of friendship and the ties of love. The wife, once loving and beloved, is made wretched for life; and the sweet babes, that hung with delightful fondness around the knees, are thrown upon the cold charity of their relations, who perhaps will teach them to lisp out curses on their parents' memory.

Men who have ruined themselves by playing, are glad to join the very scoundrels that destroyed them, and live upon the spoil of others. Estates are now almost as frequently made over by whist and hazard, as by deeds and settlements; and the chariot of many of our ladies of fashion may be said to "roll upon the four aces."

Gamesters generally lose their temper and humanity with their money, and grudge their families the necessaries of life, while they themselves are squandering thousands.

Gaming, like French liberty, levels all distinctions. The peer and his valet, the man of honour and a swindler, may happen to sit at the same table; and a looker-on cannot distinguish the man of rank from a sharper sprung from the very dregs of the vulgar.

EXAMPLES.

A man of pleasure; a person of high birth, and high spirit; of great parts, and strong passions; every way accomplished, not least in iniquity; by his unkind treatment, was the death of a most amiable wife; his gaming, love of pleasure, and great extravagance, at length disinherited his only child.

The sad evening before he died, (says our

author) I was with him. No one else was there but his physician and an intimate, whom he loved, and whom he had ruined.

At my coming in, he said, "You and the physician are come too late; I have neither life nor hope! You both aim at miracles: you would raise the dead."

Refusing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence, he exclaimed, "Oh, time, time! it is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled for ever! A month! oh, for a single week! I ask not for years; though an age were too little for the much I have to do. Pray, you that can. I never prayed; I cannot pray, nor need I. Is not Heaven on my side already? It closes with my conscience; its severest strokes but second my own."

His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this, (who could forbear? I could not,) with a most affectionate look he said—"Keep these tears for thyself: I have undone thee. Dost weep for me? That's cruel. What can pain me more?

Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him.

"No; stay: Thou still mayst hope: therefore hear me. How madly have I talked! How madly hast thou listened and believed? But look on my present state, as a full answer to thee, and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if strong by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason, full mighty to suffer. And that, which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality, is doubtless immortal. And

for a Deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel ! My soul as my body, lies in ruins ; in scattered fragments of broken thought. Remorse for the past throws my thought on the future : worse dread of the future strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames. That is not an everlasting flame ; that is not an unquenchable fire. My principles have poisoned my friend ; my extravagance has beggared my boy ; my unkindness has murdered my wife ! And is there another hell ? Oh, thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent Lord God ! Hell itself is refuge, if it hides me from thy frown."

Soon after, his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgot. And here the sun (which I hope has seen few like him) arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenious, accomplished, and most wretched Altamont, expired.

It is related of Mr. Locke, that being invited to a company of the highest rank and first abilities in the kingdom, and hearing cards called for as soon as dinner was over, he retired thoughtful to a window ; and being asked the reason of his seriousness, replied, " He had not slept the foregoing night, for the pleasure which their lordships had given him to expect from that day's conversation with men of the first character for sense and genius ; and hoped his sorrow for his disappointment would be forgiven him." This seasonable rebuke had the proper effect : the game was instantly thrown up, and conversation restored with a brilliancy suitable to the illustrious assembly.

In one of the principal cities in Europe lived Lucius and Sapphira, blessed with a moderate fortune, health, mutual love, and peace of mind. Their family consisted of two little darlings, a son and a daughter. They seemed to want for nothing as an addition to their happiness : nor were they insensible of what they enjoyed ; but animated with gratitude to Heaven, they were happy instruments of good to all about them. Towards the close of the summer in 1765, Lucius happened to be in company with some neighbouring gentlemen, who proposed to waste an hour or so at cards ; he consented, more in complaisance to the taste of others than his own. Like other gamesters, he met with a variety of fortune, (a variety more seducing than a continuance either of good or bad,) and being warm with liquor, he was inconsiderately drawn in, before the company broke up, to involve himself more than his fortune could bear. The next day, on sober reflection, he could not support the thoughts of that distress which his folly had brought upon Sapphira and her little innocents. He had not courage enough to acquaint her with what had happened ; and, whilst in the midst of pangs, to which he hitherto had been a stranger, he was visited, and again tempted, by one of the last night's company, to try his fortune once more. In order to drown reflection, and in hopes of recovering his loss, he flew to the fatal place ; nor did he leave it till he had lost his all. The consequence of this was, that the next day, in indescribable despair, after writing to acquaint Sapphira with what had happened, he shot himself through the head. The news of this deprived the lady of her senses. She is (at least was lately) confined in a mad-house ; and the two little innocents, destitute of parents and fortune, have a trouble-

some world to struggle with ; and are likely to feel the miseries which poverty and a servile dependence entail upon the wretched.

A young lady, who lived in the north, was on the point of marriage with a young gentleman, of whom she was passionately fond, and but whom she was as greatly beloved. She was at the same time admired by a person of high rank, by whose passion, as he was already married, was consequently dishonourable. He was determined however, at any rate, to indulge his diabolical lusts ; but the lady being a person of the strictest honour, he was obliged to act with caution, and keep his intentions a secret. Knowing her propensity to gaming, he laid a snare for her, into which she fell, to the great diminution of her fortune. This he, fiend-like, took care to have represented with the most aggravated circumstances to the gentleman to whom she was engaged. Upon which his friends pointed to the young lover the dreadful inconveniences of his taking a gamester to wife : that poverty, disease, and probably dishonour to his bed, were the likely consequences. In a word, they so managed matters, as to break off the match. The “ noble villain,” who occasioned the breach between the lovers, notwithstanding, missed his wicked ends : his addresses and proposals met with the contempt and abhorrence which they deserved. Yet, though she preserved her chastity—a circumstance very precarious amongst female gamesters—the loss of her intended spouse, on whom she had inviolably fixed her affections, threw her into a decline, which in a few months put a period to her life.

The late Colonel Daniel (who took great pleasure in giving advice to young officers, guiding them in their military functions, &c.) whenever

he was upon this article of gaming, used always to tell the following story of himself, as a warning to others; and to show that a little resolution may conquer this absurd passion. During Queen Anne's wars, he was an ensign in the English army, then in Spain: but he was so absolutely possessed by this evil, that all duty, and every thing else which prevented his gratifying that darling passion, was grievous to him. He scarce allowed himself time to rest; or, if he slept, his dreams presented packs of cards to his eyes, and the rattling of dice to his ears. His meals were neglected; or, if he attended them, he looked upon that as so much lost time, swallowed his meat with precipitancy, and hurried to the gaming-table again. For some time Fortune was his friend; and he was so successful, that he has often spread his winnings on the ground, and rolled himself upon them, in order that it might be said of him, "He wallowed in gold." Such was his life for a considerable time; but, as he often said, (and we may presume, every considerate man will join with him,) "it was the most miserable part of it." After some time he was ordered on the recruiting duty; and at Barcelona he raised 150 recruits for the regiment; though even this business was left entirely to his serjeant, that he might be more at leisure to attend his darling passion. After some changes of good and ill luck, Fortune declared so openly against him, that in one unlucky run he was totally stripped of the last farthing. In this distress he applied to a captain of the same regiment with himself for a loan of ten guineas; which was refused with these words: "What! lend my money to a professed gamester? No, Sir; I must be excused: for, of necessity, I must lose either my money or my friend. I there-

fore choose to keep my money." After this taunting refusal he retired to his lodging; where he threw himself upon the bed, to lay his thoughts and his sorrows to a momentary rest during the heat of the day. A gnat, or some such insect, happening to bite him, he awoke; when his melancholy situation immediately presented itself to him in strong colours; without money, and no prospect how to get any, to subsist himself and his recruits to the regiment, who were then at a great distance from him; and should they desert for want of their pay, he must be answerable for it; and he could expect nothing but cashiering for disappointing the queen's service. He had no friend: for he, whom he had esteemed such, had not only refused to assist him, but had added taunts to his refusal. He had no acquaintance there; and strangers, he knew, would not let him have so large a sum as was adequate to his real necessity. This naturally led him to reflect seriously on what had induced him to commence gamester; and this he presently perceived was idleness. He had now found the cause; but the cure was still wanting. How was this to be effected, so as to preclude a relapse? Something must be done; some method pursued, so effectually to employ his time, as to prevent his having any to throw away on gaming. In this state of mind it occurred to him that the adjutancy of the regiment was to be disposed of; and this he determined to purchase, as a post the most likely to find him a sufficient and laudable way of passing his time. He had letters of credit, to draw for what sum he pleased for his promotion in the army: but not to throw away idly, or to encourage his extravagance. Thus far all was well; but the main difficulty remained; and he must

get to the regiment before he could get any steps toward the intended purchase, or draw for the sum to make it with. While he was thus endeavouring to fall upon some expedient to extricate himself from this dilemma, his friend, the captain, who had refused him in the morning, came to pay him a visit. After a very cool reception on the colonel's side, the other began by asking him what steps he intended to take to relieve himself from the anxiety he plainly perceived he was in? The colonel then told him all that he had been thinking upon that head; and the resolution he had made of purchasing the adjutancy as soon as he could join the regiment. His friend then getting up, and embracing him, said, "My dear Daniel! I refused you in the morning in that abrupt manner, in order to bring you to a sense of the dangerous situation you were in, and to make you reflect seriously on the folly of the way of life in which you are engaged. I heartily rejoice that it has had the desired effect. Pursue the laudable resolution you have made; for be assured that IDLENESS AND GAMING ARE THE RUIN OF YOUTH. My interest, advice, and purse, are now at your command. There; take it, and please yourself with what is necessary to subsist yourself and the recruits." This presently brought the colonel off the bed; and the afternoon's behaviour entirely obliterated the harshness of the morning's refusal. He now viewed the captain in the agreeable light of a sincere friend, and for ever after esteemed, and found him such. In short, the colonel set out with his recruits for the regiment, where he gained great applause for his success; which, as well as his commission, he had well nigh lost by one morning's folly. He immediately solicited for, and purchased the adjutancy; and from that day never

touched cards or dice, but (as they ought to be used) merely for diversion, or to unbend the mind after too close an attention to serious affairs.

Lysander was the only son of Hortensius, a gentleman of large fortune ; who with a paternal eye watched over his education ; and suffered no means to be neglected, which might promote his future usefulness, honour, or happiness. Under such tuition he grew up, improving in every amiable accomplishment. His person was graceful ; and his countenance the picture of his soul, lively, sweet, and penetrating. By his own application, and the assistance of suitable preceptors, he was master of the whole circle of sciences ; and nothing was now wanting to form the complete gentleman, but travelling. The tour of Europe was therefore resolved upon, and a proper person provided to attend him. Lysander and his tutor directed their course to France ; and crossed the sea at Dover, with an intention to pay their first visit to Paris. Here Lysander had difficulties to surmount, of which he was little apprised. He had been bred in shades and solitude, and had no idea of the active scenes of life. It is easy to imagine, therefore, his surprise at being transported, as it were, into a new world. He was delighted with the elegance of the city, and the crowds of company that resorted to the public walks. He launched into pleasures ; and was enabled to commit a thousand extravagancies, by the ample supplies of money which a fond father allowed him. In vain his tutor represented to him the imprudence of his conduct ; captivated with the novelty of every thing around him, he was deaf to all his remonstrances. He engaged in an intrigue with a woman of the most infamous character ; who in a short time reduced him to the necessity of

making fresh demands upon his father. The indulgent Hortensius, with a few reprimands for his profusion, and admonitions to economy, remitted him considerable sums. But these were not sufficient to satisfy an avaricious mistress; and, ashamed to expose himself again to his father, he had recourse to Fortune. He daily frequented the gaming tables; and, elated with a trifling success at the beginning, gave up every other pleasure for that of rattling the dice. Sharpers were now his only companions, and his youth and inexperience made him an easy prey to their artifices and designs. His father heard of his conduct with inexpressible sorrow. He instantly called him home; but alas! the return to his native country did not restore him to his native dispositions. The love of learning, generosity, humanity, and every noble principle, were suppressed; and in their place, the most detestable avarice had taken root. The reproofs of a father, so affectionate as Hortensius, were too gentle to reclaim one confirmed in vicious habits. He still pursued the same unhappy course; and at length, by his dissolute behaviour, put an end to the life of the tenderest of parents. The death of Hortensius had at first a happy effect upon the mind of Ly-sander; and, by recalling him to a sense of reflection, gave some room to hope for reformation. To confirm the good resolutions he had formed, his friends urged him to marry. The proposal not being disagreeable to him, he paid his addresses to Aspasia; a lady possessed of beauty, virtue, and the sweetest dispositions. So many charms could not but impress a heart which filial grief had already in some measure softened. He loved and married her; and, by her prudent conduct was prevailed upon to give up all the former associates

of his favourite vice. Two years passed in this happy manner; during which time, Aspasia blessed him with a son. The little darling had united in him all *the father's lustre and the mother's grace*. Lysander often viewed him with streaming eyes of tenderness; and he would sometimes cry out, "Only, my son, avoid thy father's steps, and every felicity will attend thee." About this time it happened that some business of importance required his presence in London. There he unfortunately met with the base wretches who had been his old acquaintance; and his too easy temper complying with their solicitations, again he plunged into the abyss of vice and folly. Aspasia, wondering at the long absence of her husband, began to entertain the most uneasy apprehensions for him. She wrote him a tender and endearing letter; but no answer was returned. Full of terror and anxiety, she went in person after her Lysander. Long was it before she heard the least tidings of him. At length, by accident, finding his lodgings, she flew to his chamber, with the most impatient joy, to embrace a long-lost husband. But ah! who can paint the agony she felt, at the sight of Lysander, weltering in his gore, with a pistol clinched in his hand! That very morning he had put an end to his wretched being. A paper was found upon the table, of his own hand writing, which imported that he had entirely ruined himself, and a most amiable wife and child; and that life was insupportable to him.

HUMANITY.

SENTIMENT.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

HUMANITY, or Mercy, is the first great attribute of the Deity, “who maketh his rain to fall upon the just and unjust.” Consequently, there is nothing that can bring a man to so near a likeness to his Maker.

A good-hearted man is easy in himself, and studies to make others so; and a denial from him is better relished by his obliging regret in doing it, than a favour granted by another.

That scourge of the human race, War, is totally repugnant to this generous attribute; but it presents innumerable opportunities of its being exercised; and he who spares a cruel enemy when in his power, gains more honour than by winning a battle.

EXAMPLES.

“The senate of the Areopagites being assembled together in a mountain, without any roof but heaven, the senators perceived a bird of prey, which pursued a little sparrow, that came to save itself in the bosom of one of their company. This man, who naturally was harsh, threw it from him so roughly, that he killed it; at which the court was offended, and a decree was made to banish him from the senate.” The judicious may observe, that this company, which was at that time one of

the gravest in the world, did it not for the care they had to make a law concerning sparrows; but it was to show, that clemency and a merciful inclination were so necessary in a state, that a man destitute of them was not worthy to hold any place in the government; he having, as it were, renounced humanity.

Marcus Antoninus, the philosopher and emperor, excelled most other men in that excellent virtue, as he manifestly showed in that glorious action of his towards Avidius Cassius and his family, who had rebelled against him in Egypt. For, as the senate bitterly prosecuted Avidius and all his relations, Antoninus, as if they had been his friends, always appeared as an intercessor in their behalf. Nothing can represent him herein so much to the life, as to recite part of the oration which, upon this occasion, was made by him in the senate, to this purpose: "As for what concerns the Cassian rebellion, I beseech you, Conscript Fathers, that, laying aside the severity of your censure you will preserve mine and your own clemency. Neither let any man be slain by the senate, nor let any man suffer that is a senator. Let not the blood of any patrician be spilt; let the banished return, and the exiles be restored to their estates: I heartily wish that I could restore those that are already dead unto life again. In an emperor, I could never approve of the revenge of his own injuries, which, however it may be oftentimes just, yet, for the most part, if not always, it appears to be cruel. You shall therefore pardon the children, son-in-law, and wife of Avidius Cassius. But why do I say pardon them, since there are none of them that have done amiss? Let them live therefore, and let them know that they live in security under Marcus. Let them live in the enjoyment of their pa-

trimony, and in the possession of their garments, their gold and silver: and let them be not only rich, but safe. Let them have the freedom to transport themselves into all places as they please; that throughout the whole world, and in the sight of all people, they may bear along with them the true and unquestionable instance of yours and my clemency." This oration was so pleasing to the senate and populace of Rome, that they extolled the humanity of Marcus with infinite praises.

Alphonsus, king of Naples and Sicily, was all goodness and mercy. He had besieged the city of Cajeta, that had insolently rebelled against him; and the city, being distressed for want of necessary provisions, put forth all their old men, women, and children, and such as were unserviceable, and shut their gates against them. The king's council advised that they should not be permitted to pass but should be forced back again into the city; by which means, he would speedily become the master of it. The king, pitying the distressed multitude, suffered them to depart, though he knew it would occasion the protraction of the siege. But, when he could not take the city, some were so bold as tell him, that it had been his own, in case he had not dealt in this manner. "But," said the king, "I value the safety of so many persons at the rate of a hundred Cajetas."

Augustus Cæsar, walking abroad with Diomedes, his freedman, a wild boar had broken the place of his restraint, and seemed to run directly towards Augustus. The freed-man, in whom, at that time, there was more of fear than of prudence, consulting his own safety, took hold of the emperor, and placed him before himself: yet Augustus never discovered any sign of anger or offence at what he did.

C. Julius Cæsar was not more famous for his valour in overcoming his enemies, than he was for his clemency ; wherein, at once he overcame both them and himself. Cornelius Phagita, one of the bloody emissaries of Sylla, in the civil dissention between him and Marius, industriously hunted out Cæsar, as one of the Marian party, from all his lurking holes, at last took him, and was with difficulty persuaded to let him escape at the price of two talents. When the times changed, and it was in his power to be severely revenged of this man, he never did him the least harm, as one that could not be angry with the winds when the tempest was over. L. Domitius, an old and sharp enemy of his, held Corfinium against him, with thirty cohorts : there were also with him very many senators, knights of Rome, and the flower and strength of the Pompeian party. Cæsar besieged the town, and the soldiers talked of surrendering both the town and themselves to Cæsar. Domitius, despairing of any mercy, commanded a physician of his to bring him a cup of poison. The physician, knowing he would repent it upon the appearance of Cæsar's clemency, gave him, instead of poison, a soporiferous potion. The town being surrendered, Cæsar called all the more honourable persons to his camp, spoke civilly to them, and, having exhorted them to peaceable and quiet counsels, sent them away in safety, with whatsoever was theirs. When Domitius heard this, he repented of the poison he supposed he had taken : but, being freed of that fear by his physician, he went out unto Cæsar, who gave him his life, liberty, and estate. In the battle of Pharsalia, as he rode to and fro, he cried, " Spare the citizens !" nor were any killed, but such only as continued to make resistance. After the battle, he gave leave to every

man of his own side to save one of the contrary : and, at last, by his edict, gave leave to all whom he had not yet pardoned, to return in peace to Italy, to enjoy their estates, honours, and commands. When he heard of the death of Pompey, which was caused by the villany of others, so far was he from exulting, that he broke out into tears, and prosecuted his murderers with slaughter and blood.

During the retreat of the famous King Alfred, at Athelney, in Somersetshire, after the defeat of his forces by the Danes, the following circumstance happened ; which, while it convinces us of the extremities to which that great man was reduced, will give a striking proof of his pious and benevolent disposition. A beggar came to his little castle, and requested alms ; when his queen informed him that they had only one small loaf remaining, which was insufficient for themselves and their friends, who were gone abroad in quest of food, though with little hopes of success. The king replied, " Give the poor Christian the one half of the loaf. He that could feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, can certainly make that half of the loaf suffice for more than our necessities." Accordingly, the poor man was relieved ; and this noble act of charity was soon recompensed by a providential store of fresh provisions, with which his people returned.

Louis the Ninth, on his return to France with his queen and his children, was very near being shipwrecked, some of the planks of the vessel having started : and he was requested to go into another ship, which was in company with that which carried them. He refused to quit his own ship, and exclaimed, " Those that are with me most assuredly are as fond of their lives as I can possi-

bly be of mine. If I quit the ship, they will likewise quit it; and the vessel not being large enough to receive them, they will all perish. I had much rather intrust my life, and those of my wife and children, into the hands of God, than be the occasion of making so many of my brave subjects perish."

Henrietta Maria, queen of Charles the First, as she was walking out northward of the city of Exeter, soon after her lying-in, stopped at the cottage of a poor woman, whom she heard making doleful cries. She sent one of her train to enquire what it might be which occasioned them. The page returned, and said the woman was sorrowing grievously because her daughter had been two days in the straw, and was almost dead for want of nourishment, she having nothing to give her but water, and not being able, for the hardness of the times, to get any thing. On this the queen took a small chain of gold from her neck, at which hung an *Agnus*. She took off the *Agnus*, and put it in her bosom; and making the woman be called to her, gave her the chain, and bade her go into the city, to a goldsmith, and sell it; and, with the money, to provide for the good woman in the straw.

Sir Philip Sidney, at the battle near Zutphen, displayed the most undaunted courage. He had two horses killed under him; and, whilst mounting a third, was wounded by a musket-shot out of the trenches, which broke the bone of his thigh. He returned about a mile and a half, on horseback, to the camp; and, being faint with the loss of blood, and probably parched with thirst, through the heat of the weather, he called for drink. It was presently brought him; but, as he was putting the vessel to his mouth, a poor wounded soldier, who happened to be carried by him at that instant,

looked up to it with wishful eyes. The gallant and generous Sidney took the bottle from his mouth, just when he was going to drink, and delivered it to the soldier, saying, "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine."

Richard Cromwell, son of Oliver Cromwell, is said to have fallen at the feet of his father, to beg the life of his sovereign, Charles I. In the same spirit of humanity, when Colonel Howard told him, on his father's death, that nothing but vigorous and violent measures could secure the protectorate to him, and that he should run no risk, as himself would be answerable for the consequences, Richard replied, "Every one shall see that I will do nobody any harm: I have never done any, nor ever will. I shall be much troubled, if any one is injured on my account; and, instead of taking away the life of the least person in the nation, for the preservation of my greatness, (which is a burthen to me,) I would not have one drop of blood spilt."

King George II. was very anxious to save the life of Dr. Cameron, against whom execution was awarded for treason, five years after the act of attainder. When he was desired to sign one of the death warrants, for a similar offence, he said, in the true spirit of mercy that has ever distinguished his illustrious house, "Surely there has been too much blood already spilt upon this occasion!" This prince seemed to have none of that love of individual and distinct property which has marked the character of many sovereigns. His majesty came one day to Richmond Gardens, and finding the gates of them locked, while some decently-dressed persons were standing on the outside, called for the head gardener, in a great passion, and told him to open the door immediately: "My subjects, Sir," added he, "walk where they please."

The same gardener complaining to him, one day, that the company in Richmond Gardens had taken up some of the flower-roots and shrubs that were planted there, his only reply was, shaking his cane at him, "Plant more, then, you blockhead you."

Queen Caroline, one day observing that her daughter, the late Princess of Orange, had made one of the ladies about her stand a long time, while she was talking to her upon some trifling subject, indeed till she was almost ready to faint, was resolved to give her a practical reprimand for her ill behaviour, that should have more weight than verbal precept. When the princess, therefore, came to her in the evening, as usual, to read to her, and was drawing herself a chair, to sit down, the queen said, "No, my dear, you must not sit at present, for I intend to make you stand this evening as long as you suffered Lady —— to remain to-day in the same position. She is a woman of the first quality; but, had she been a nursery-maid, you should, have remembered she was a human creature as well as yourself."

The Duc de Montmorenci, one day playing at hazard, won a considerable sum of money. A gentleman, standing near him, said to his friend, "That, now, is a sum which would pay all my debts, and make me happy." "Would it so, Sir?" replied the duke; "take it, then; I only wish that it were more." As the duke was walking one day in the fields near Thoulouse, with another nobleman, their discourse turned upon the happiness of men in different situations; and whether those were most to be envied, who were in eminent, or those who were in low situations of life. "Ho!" says the duke, on observing three or four peasants, who were making their frugal meal under a tree, "These men shall settle the point for us." He

comes up to them, and, accosting them in his usual gracious manner, says, "My friends, are you happy? Pray tell me." Three of them told him, that, confining their happiness to a few acres which they had received from their ancestors, they desired nothing farther: the fourth said, that all that he wished, was to be able to regain the possession of a part of his patrimony, which had passed into other hands, by the misfortunes of some of his family. "Well, then, my friend, if you had it again, you think you should be happy?" "As happy, my lord duke, I think, as a man can possibly be in this world." "What would it cost you to recover it?" "Two thousand livres, Sir." "Well, then," said the duke, turning to one of his attendants "present him with the money, that I may say I have had the satisfaction to-day of making one person happy."

A very similar anecdote is told of the late Beau Nash, of Bath. A gentleman of broken fortune one day standing behind his chair, as he was playing a game of picquet for 200*l.* and observing with what indifference he won the money, could not avoid whispering these words to another, who stood by; "Heavens! how happy would all that money make me!" Nash, overhearing him, clapped the money into his hand, and cried, "Go, and be happy!" An instance of his humanity is told us in the *Spectator*, though his name is not mentioned. When he was to give in some official accounts, among other articles, he charged, "For making one man happy 10*l.*" Being questioned about the meaning of so strange an item, he frankly declared, that, happening to overhear a poor man declare to his wife and a large family of children that 10*l.* would make him happy, he could not avoid trying the experiment. He added,

that if they did not choose to acquiesce in his charge, he was ready to refund the money. His employers, struck with such an uncommon instance of good nature, publicly thanked him for his benevolence, and desired that the sum might be doubled, as a proof of their satisfaction. In the severe winter, in 1739, his charity was great, useful, and extensive. He frequently at that season of calamity entered the houses of the poor, whom he thought too proud to beg, and generously relieved them. But, of all the instances of Nash's bounty, none does him more real honour, than the pains he took in establishing an hospital in Bath. It is with pain we add, after this, that in the evening of his life, he stood in want of that charity which he had never refused to any one.

Frederick, king of Prussia, one day rang his bell, and nobody answered ; on which he opened his door, and found his page fast asleep in an elbow chair. He advanced toward him, and was going to awaken him, when he perceived part of a letter hanging out of his pocket. His curiosity prompting him to know what it was, he took it out and read it. It was a letter from this young man's mother, in which she thanked him for having sent her part of his wages to relieve her in her misery, and finished, with telling him that God would reward him for his dutiful affection. The king, after having read it, went back softly into his chamber, took a bag, full of ducats, and slipped it, with the letter, into the page's pocket. Returning to the chamber, he rang the bell so loudly, that it awakened the page, who instantly made his appearance. "You have had a sound sleep," said the king. The page was at a loss how to excuse himself ; and, putting his hand into his pocket, by chance, to his utter astonishment, he there

found a purse of ducats. He took it out, turned pale, and, looking at the king, shed a torrent of tears, without being able to utter a single word. "What is that?" said the king: "what is the matter?"—"Ah, Sire!" said the young man, throwing himself on his knees, "somebody seeks my ruin! I know nothing of this money, which I have just found in my pocket!" "My young friend," replied Frederick, "God often does great things for us even in our sleep. Send that to your mother: salute her on my part, and assure her that I will take care of both her and you."

INDUSTRY.

SENTIMENTS.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.

A MAN who gives his children a habit of industry, provides for them better than by giving them a stock of money.

Industry accomplishes things that, to the idle and indolent, appear impossibilities.

The active do commonly more than they are obliged to do ; the indolent do less.

The man who, with industry and diligence, fills up the duties of his station, is like the clear river, which refines as it flows, and gladdens and fertilizes every land through which it glides.

To strive with difficulties and to conquer them, is the highest human felicity ; the next is to strive, and deserve to conquer.

No man can be happy in total idleness. He that should be condemned to lie torpid and motionless, would fly for recreation to the mines and the galleys.

The hand of the diligent maketh rich ; but the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing.

“ The devil,” says a Spanish proverb, “ tempts every man, but an idle man tempts the devil.”

The bread gained by industry is the sweetest, because it is eaten with satisfaction.

EXAMPLES.

Horace, a celebrated Roman poet, relates that a countryman, who wanted to pass a river, stood loitering on the banks of it, in the foolish expectation that a current so rapid would soon discharge its waters. But the stream still flowed, increased perhaps, by fresh torrents from the mountains; and it must for ever flow, because the sources from which it is derived are inexhaustible.

Thus the idle and irresolute youth trifles over his books, or wastes in play his precious moments; deferring the task of improvement, which at first is easy to be accomplished, but which will become more and more difficult, the longer it be neglected.

At Athens there were two poor young men, Menedemes and Asclepiades, who were greatly addicted to the study of philosophy. They had no visible means of support, yet kept up their plight and colour, looked hale, well, and in good condition. The judges had information given them of the retired life of these two, and of their neither having any thing to live on, nor apparently doing any thing to maintain themselves: consequently, as they could not live without sustenance, it was inferred that they must have some clandestine means of subsisting. Upon this ground of information, the young men were summoned before the judge, and ordered to answer to the charge. One of the accused, after saying that little credit was given to what a man could urge in his own defence, (it being natural to believe that every criminal will either deny or extenuate the crimes he is charged with), and, adding that

the testimony of a disinterested person was not liable to suspicion, desired that a certain baker, whom he named, might be summoned, and answer for them. Accordingly the baker, being come, declared that the young men under examination took it by turns to grind his corn every night; and that, for their night's work, he every morning paid the young man who ground at the hand-mill a drachma; that is, about a groat. The judges, surprised at their abstinence and industry, ordered as a reward of their virtue, that 200 drachmas shuldo be paid them out of the public money.

"Pray, of what did your brother die?" said the Marquis Spinoli, one day, to Sir Horace Vere. "He died, Sir," replied he, "of having nothing to do." "Alas! Sir," said Spinoli, "that is enough to kill any general of us all."

Montesquieu says, "We in general place idleness among the beatitudes of heaven; it should rather, I think, be put amidst the torments of hell."

That famous disturber and scourge of mankind, Charles the Twelfth, of Sweden, used to say "that by resolution and perseverance, a man might do every thing." Now, though we may not entirely agree with his majesty, so far, at least, we may venture to observe, that every man may, by unremitting application and endeavours, do much more than, at the first setting out, he thought it possible that he ever could do.

A gentleman was under close confinement in the Bastile for seven years, during which time he amused himself in scattering a few small pins about his chamber, gathering them up again, and placing them in different figures on the arm of a great chair. He often told his friends, afterwards, that unless he had found out this piece of exercise, he verily believed he should have lost his senses.

Sir William Temple, in his heads for an Essay on the different Conditions of Life and Fortune, pleasantly tells us of "An old man near the Hague, who," says he, "served my house from his dairy, and grew so rich, that he gave it over, bought a house, and furnished it, at the Hague, resolving to live at ease the rest of his life; but at length, grew so weary of being idle, that he sold it, and returned again to his dairy."

"Love labour," cried a philosopher: "if you do not want it for food you may for physic." The idle man is more perplexed what to do, than the industrious in doing what he ought. Action keeps the soul in constant health; but idleness corrupts and rusts the mind: and he that follows recreations, instead of his business, shall, in a little time, have no business to follow.

Demosthenes is an immortal instance of the noblest perseverance; the only virtue that is crowned. He was extremely affected with the honours which he saw paid to the Orator Callistratus; and still more, with the supreme power of eloquence over the minds of men; and, not being able to resist its charms, he gave himself wholly up to it, from thenceforth renounced all other studies and pleasures, and, during the continuance of Callistratus at Athens, he never quitted him, but made all the improvement he could from his precepts. The first essay of his eloquence was against his guardians, whom he obliged to refund a part of his fortune. Encouraged by this event, he ventured to speak before the people, but with very ill success. He had a weak voice, a thick way of speaking, and a very short breath; notwithstanding which, his periods were so long, that he was often obliged to stop in the midst of them for respiration. This occasioned his being hissed by

the whole audience. As he withdrew, hanging down his head, and in the utmost confusion, Satyrus, one of the most excellent actors of those times, who was his friend, met him; and, having learnt from himself the cause of his being so much dejected, assured him that the evil was not without remedy, and that his case was not so desperate as he imagined. He desired him to repeat some of the verses of Sophocles and Euripides to him; which he did. Satyrus spoke them after him; and gave them such graces, by the tone, gesture, and spirit with which he pronounced them, that Demosthenes himself found them quite different from what they were in his own manner of speaking. He perceived plainly what he wanted, and applied himself strenuously to the acquiring of it. His efforts to correct his natural defect of utterance, and to perfect himself in pronunciation, seem almost incredible; and prove, as Cicero remarks, that an industrious perseverance can surmount almost all things. He stammered to such a degree, that he could not pronounce some letters; among others, that with which the name of "Rhetoric," the art he studied, begins. He was also short-breathed, as above mentioned. These obstacles he overcame at length, by putting small pebbles into his mouth, pronouncing several verses in that manner without interruption; and accompanying it with walking, or going up steep and difficult places: so that, at last, no letter made him hesitate; and his breath held out through the longest periods. He went also to the sea-side, and, whilst the waves were in the most violent agitation, he pronounced harangues, both to strengthen his voice, and to accustom himself to the noise of the waters, to the roar of the people, and the tumultuous cries of public assemblies. Demosthenes took no less care of his

action than of his voice. He had a large looking-glass in his house, which served to teach him gesture, and at which he used to declaim before he spoke in public. To correct a fault which he had contracted by an ill habit of shrugging up his shoulders, he practised standing upright, in a very narrow pulpit or rostrum, over which hung a halberd, in such a manner, that if, in the heat of action, that motion escaped him, the point of the weapon might serve at the same time to admonish and correct him. His application to study was no less surprising. To be the more removed from noise, and less subject to distraction, he shut himself up in a small room, under ground, sometimes for months together; and there it was, by the light of his lamp, that he composed those admirable orations, which were said by those who envied him, to "smell of the oil;" to imply, that they were too elaborate. Demosthenes heard them, and only told them, in reply, "It is plain that yours did not cost you so much trouble." He rose constantly very early in the morning; and used to say that he was sorry when any workman was at his business before him. We may further judge of his extraordinary efforts to acquire excellence of every kind, from the pains he took in copying Thucydides's History eight times with his own hand, in order to render the style of that great man familiar to him. And his labour was well bestowed; for it was by these means, that he carried the art of declaiming to the highest degree of perfection of which it was capable: whence it is plain he well knew its value and importance.

Varia Servilius, descended of a Prætorian family, was remarkable for nothing but sloth and indolence, in which he grew old and odious; insomuch, that it was commonly said, by such as passed his house,

Hic Varia situs est; Here lies Varia: thus speaking of him as a person not only dead, but buried, to all intents and purposes of rational existence.

About fifty years ago, the small territory of Can-car, known in the maritime charts under the name of Ponthiamas, was wholly uncultivated, and almost destitute of inhabitants. A Chinese merchant, commander of a vessel, which he employed in commerce, frequented these coasts. Being a man of that intelligent, reflective genius, which so characteristically marks his nation, he could not, without pain, behold immense tracts of ground condemned to sterility, though naturally more fertile than those which formed the riches of his own country. He meditated, therefore, a plan for their improvement. With this view, having first of all hired a number of labourers, some Chinese, others from neighbouring nations, he, with great address, insinuated himself into the favour of the most powerful princes; who, for a certain subsidy, assigned him a guard for his protection. In the course of his voyage to Batavia and the Phillipine Islands, he borrowed from the Europeans their most useful discoveries and improvements, particularly the art of fortification and defence. With regard to internal police, he gave the preference to the Chinese. The profits of his commerce soon enabled him to raise ramparts, sink ditches, and provide artillery. These preliminary precautions secured him a *coup de main*, and protected him from the enterprises of surrounding nations. He distributed the lands to his labourers, without the least reservation of any of those duties, or taxes, known by the name of services, or fines of alienation; duties which, by allowing no real property, become the most fatal scourge to agriculture, and suggest an idea which revolts against the common sense of

every wise nation. He provided his colonists, at the same time, with all sorts of instruments proper for the labour and improvement of their grounds. In forming a labouring and commercial people, he thought no laws ought to be enacted, but those which nature has established for the human race in every climate: he made those laws respected by observing them first himself, and exhibiting an example of simplicity, industry, frugality, humanity, and good faith. He formed, therefore, no system of laws; but he did more; he established morals. His territories soon became the country of every industrious man, who wished to settle there. His port was open to all nations: the woods were cleared; the grounds judiciously laboured, and sown with rice; canals cut from the rivers, watered their fields; and plentiful harvests, after supplying them with subsistence, furnished an object of extensive commerce. The barbarians of the neighbourhood, amazed to see abundance so suddenly succeed to sterility, flocked for subsistence to the magazines of Ponthiamas, whose dominions at this day are considered as the most plentiful granary of that part of Asia; the Malays, the Cochin-Chinese, and the Siamese, whose countries are naturally so fertile, considering this little territory as the most certain resource against famine.

A gentleman in Surrey had a farm worth 200*l.* per annum, which he kept in his own hands; but, running out every year, he was necessitated to sell half of it, to pay his debts, and let the rest to a farmer for one-and-twenty years. Before the term was expired, the farmer, one day, bringing his rent, asked him if he would sell his land "Why," said the gentleman, "will you buy it?" "Yes, if it please you," said the farmer. "How?" returned he, "that's strange! Tell me how this comes to

pass, that I could not live upon twice as much, being my own; and you, upon the half, though you have paid the rent for it, are able to buy it?"—"Oh! Sir," said the farmer, "but two words made the difference: you said, Go; and I said, Come."—"What's the meaning of that?" says the gentleman.—"Why, Sir," replied the other, "you lay in bed, or took your pleasure, and sent others about your business; and I rose betimes, and saw my business done myself."

It is said, in the history of the life of Lopez de Vega, a Spanish writer, that no less than 1800 comedies, the production of his pen, have been actually represented on the Spanish stage. His *Autos Sacramentales*, a kind of sacred drama, exceed 400; besides which there is a collection of his poems of various kinds, in 21 vols. 4to. He said of himself, that he wrote five sheets per day; which, reckoning by the time he lived, has been calculated to amount to 133,225 sheets. He sometimes composed a comedy in two days, which it would have been difficult for another man to have even copied in the same time. At Toledo he wrote once five comedies in fifteen days, reading them as he proceeded, in a private house, to Joseph de Valdevieso. Juan Perez de Montalvan relates that, a comedy being wanted for the carnival at Madrid, Lopez and he united to compose one as fast they could. Lopez took the first act, and Montalvan the second, which they wrote in two days; and the third act they divided, taking eight sheets each. Montalvan, seeing that the other wrote faster than he could, says, he rose at two in the morning, and, having finished his part at eleven, he went to look for Lopez, whom he found in the garden, looking at an orange tree that was frozen; and, on enquiring what progress he had made in the verses, Lopez re-

plied, "At five I began to write, and finished the comedy an hour ago; since which, I have breakfasted, written one hundred and fifty other verses, and watered the garden, and am pretty well tired." He then read to Montalvan the eight sheets, and the one hundred and fifty verses.

Gassendi, the celebrated philosopher, was, perhaps, one of the hardiest students that ever existed. In general, he rose at three o'clock in the morning, and read or wrote till eleven, when he received the visits of his friends. He afterwards, at twelve, made a very slender dinner, at which he drank nothing but water, and sat down to his books again at three. There he remained till eight o'clock; when, after having eaten a very light supper, he retired to bed at ten o'clock.

Queen Mary, wife of William the Third, used to say that she looked upon idleness as the great corrupter of human nature, and believed that if the mind had no employment given it, it would create some of the worst to itself; and she thought that any thing which might amuse and divert, without leaving a dreg and impression behind it, ought to fill up those vacant hours that were not claimed by devotion or business. "When her eyes," says Bishop Burnet, "were endangered by reading too much, she found out the amusement of work; and, in all those hours that were not given to better employments, she wrought with her own hands, and that, sometimes, with so constant a diligence, as if she had been to earn her bread by it. Her example soon wrought on not only those that belonged to her, but the whole town, to follow it; so that it was become as much the fashion to work, as it had been to be idle.

Dr. Johnson says, in the Rambler, "Whenever chance brings within my observation a knot of

young ladies busy at their needles, I consider myself as in the school of virtue; and though I have no extraordinary skill in plain-work or embroidery, I look upon their operations with as much satisfaction as their governess, because I regard them as providing a security against the most dangerous ensnarers of the soul, by enabling themselves to exclude idleness from their solitary moments; and, with idleness, her attendant train of passions, fancies, chimeras, fears, sorrows, and desires.



——— Ingratitude !

Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand,
For lifting food to it ?

KING LEAR.

INGRATITUDE.

SENTIMENTS.

*He that's ungrateful has no guilt but one;
All other crimes may pass for virtues in him.*

THOSE who return evil for good, and repay kindness and assistance with hatred or neglect, are corrupted beyond the common degrees of wickedness; nor will he who once has been clearly detected in acts of injury to his benefactor deserve to be numbered among social beings: he tends to destroy confidence, to intercept sympathy, and to blunt the generous intentions of the benevolent to more grateful objects.

He who complains of favours withheld, will be ungrateful when they are bestowed.

You may sooner expect a favour from him who has already done you one, than from him to whom you have done it.

Too great hurry in repaying an obligation is a species of ingratitude.

The ungrateful rejoice but once in the favours they receive; the grateful, always.

The ungrateful dares accept a benefit from none; dares bestow it upon none.

EXAMPLES.

Cicero, flying for his life, was pursued by Herennius and Popilius Lena. This latter, at the request of M. Cælius, Cicero had formerly defended with equal care and eloquence; and, from a hazardous and doubtful cause, sent him home in safety. This Popilius, afterwards (not provoked by Cicero, in word or deed), of his own accord, asked Antonius to be sent after Cicero, then proscribed, to kill him. Having obtained a license for this detestable employment, with great joy he speeded to Cajeta, and there commands that person to stretch out his throat, who was, (not to mention his dignity) the author of his safety, and deserved the most grateful returns from him. Yet he did, with great unconcernedness, cut off the head of Roman eloquence, and the renowned right hand of peace. With that burden, he returned to the city; nor while he was so laden, did it ever come into his thought, that he carried in his arms that head, which had heretofore pleaded for the safety of his.

Parmenio had served, with great fidelity, Philip, the father of Alexander, as well as himself, for whom

he had first opened the way into Asia. He had depressed Attalus, the king's enemy; he had always, in all hazards, the leading of the king's vanguard: he was not less prudent in council, than fortunate in all attempts: a man beloved of the men of war; and, to say the truth, that had made the purchase for the king of the empire of the East, and of all the glory and fame he had. After he had lost two of his sons in the king's wars, Hector and Nicanor, and another in torment upon suspicion of treason, this great Parmenio Alexander resolved to deprive of life by the hands of murderers, without so much as acquainting him with the cause; and could choose out no other to expedite this unworthy business, but the greatest of Parmenio's friends, which was Polydamus, whom he trusted most and loved best, and would always have to stand at his side in every fight. He and Cleander dispatched this great man, as he was reading the king's letter, in his garden in Media. So fell Parmenio, who had performed many notable exploits without the king; but the king, without him, did never effect any thing worthy of praise.

Philip, king of Macedon, had sent one of his courtiers to sea, to dispatch something he had given him in command: a storm came, and he was shipwrecked; but saved by one that lived there, about the shore, in a little boat, wherein he was taken up. He was brought to his farm, and there entertained, with all civility and humanity; and, at thirty days end, dismissed by him, and furnished with somewhat to bear his charges. At his return, he told the king of his wreck and dangers, but nothing of the benefits he had received. The king told him he would not be unmindful of his fidelity, and the dangers he had undergone in his behalf. He, taking the occasion, told the king he had ob-

served a little farm on the shore, and besought him to bestow that on him, as a monument of his escape, and reward of his service. The king ordered Pausanias, the governor, to assign him the farm, to be possessed by him. The poor man, being thus turned out, applied himself to the king, told him with what humanity he had treated the courtier, and what an ungrateful injury he had returned him in lieu of it. The king, upon hearing the cause, in great anger commanded the courtier presently to be seized, and to be branded in the forehead with these letters, "*Hospes ingratus*; The ungrateful guest:" restoring the farm to its proper owner.

Henry Keeble, lord mayor of London, 1511, besides other benefactions in his life-time, rebuilt Aldermary church, which had run to ruin, and bequeathed, at his death, one thousand pounds for the finishing of it: yet, within sixty years after, his bones were unkindly, nay, inhumanly cast out of the vault wherein they were buried, and his monument plucked down, for some wealthy person of the present times to be buried therein.

Belisarius was general of all the forces under the Emperor Justinian the First, a man of rare valour and virtue: he had overthrown the Persians, Goths, and Vandals; had taken the kings of these people in war, and sent them prisoners to his master; he had recovered Sicilia, Africa, and the greater part of Italy. He had done all this with a small number of soldiers, and less cost: he restored military discipline, by his authority, when long lost; he was allied to Justinian himself; and a man of that uncorrupted fidelity, that, though he was offered the kingdom of Italy, he refused it. This great man, upon some jealousy and groundless suspicion, was seized upon, his eyes put out,

his house rifled, his estate confiscated, and himself reduced to that miserable state and condition, as to go up and down in the common road, with this form of begging: "Give one halfpenny to poor Belisarius, whom virtue raised, and envy hath overthrown."

Topal Osman, who had received his education in the Seraglio, was in the year 1698, about the age of twenty-five, sent with the sultan's orders to the bashaw of Cairo. He travelled by land to Said; and being afraid of the Arabs, who rove about plundering passengers and caravans, he embarked on board a Turkish vessel bound to Damietta, a city on the Nile. In this short passage, they were attacked by a Spanish privateer, and a very bloody action ensued. Topal Osman here gave the first proofs of that intrepidity by which he was so often signalized afterwards. The crew, animated by his example, fought with great bravery; but superior numbers at last prevailed, and Osman was taken prisoner, after being dangerously wounded in the arm and thigh.

Osman's gallantry induced the Spanish captain to pay him particular regard: but his wounds were still in a bad way when he was carried to Malta, where the privateer went to refit. The wound in his thigh was the most dangerous, and he was lame of it ever after; for which he had the name of *Topal*, or cripple.

At that time Vincent Arnaud, a native of Marseilles, was commander of the port at Malta; who, as his business required, went on board the privateer as soon as she came to anchor. Osman no sooner saw Arnaud, than he said to him, "Can you do a generous and gallant action? Ransom me: and take my word, you shall lose nothing by it." Such a request, from a slave in chains, was un

common; but the manner in which it was delivered made an impression upon the Frenchman, who, turning to the captain of the privateer, asked what he demanded for the ransom. He answered, 1000 sequins, (near 500*l*.) Arnaud, turning to the Turk, said, "I know nothing of you? and would you have me risk 1000 sequins on your word?" "Each of us act in this," replied the Turk, "with consistency. I am in chains, and therefore try every method to recover my liberty, and you may have reason to distrust the word of a stranger. I have nothing at present but my bare word to give you; nor do I pretend to assign any reason why you should trust to it. I can only say, that if you incline to act a generous part, you shall have no reason to repent." The commander, upon this, went to make his report to the Grand Master, Don Perellos. The air with which Osman delivered himself wrought so upon Arnaud, that he returned immediately on board the Spanish vessel, and agreed with the captain for 600 sequins, which he paid as the price of Osman's liberty. He put him on board a vessel of his own, and provided him a surgeon, with every thing necessary for his entertainment and cure.

Osman had mentioned to his benefactor, that he might write to Constantinople for the money he had advanced; but, finding himself in the hands of a man who had trusted so much to his honour, he was emboldened to ask another favour; which was, to leave the payment of the ransom entirely to him. Arnaud discerned, that in such a case, things were not to be done by halves. He agreed to the proposal with a good grace; and shewed him every other mark of generosity and friendship. Accordingly Osman, as soon as he was in a condition, set out again upon his voyage. ✓

The French colours now protected him from the

privateers. In a short time he reached Damietta, and sailed up the Nile to Cairo. No sooner was he arrived there, than he delivered 1000 sequins to the master of the vessel, to be paid to his benefactor Arnaud, together with some rich furs; and he gave to the master himself 500 crowns as a present. He executed the orders of the sultan his master with the bashaw of Cairo; and setting out for Constantinople, was the first who brought the news of his slavery.

The favour received from Arnaud in such circumstances made an impression upon a generous mind too deep to be ever eradicated. During the whole course of his life he did not cease, by letters and other acknowledgements, to testify his gratitude.

In 1715, war was declared between the Venetians and Turks. The grand Vizir, who had projected the invasion of the Morea, assembled the Ottoman army near the isthmus of Corinth, the only pass by which the peninsula can be attacked by land. Topal Osman was charged with the command to force the pass; which he not only executed successfully, but afterwards took the city of Corinth by assault. For this service he was rewarded by being made a bashaw of two-tails. The next year he served as lieutenant-general under the Grand Vizir at the siege of Corfu, which the Turks were obliged to abandon. Osman staid three days before the place, to secure and conduct the retreat of the Ottoman troops.

In 1722 he was appointed seraskier (general in chief) and had the command of the army in the Morea. When the consuls of the different nations came to pay their respects to him in this quality, he distinguished the French by peculiar marks of kindness and protection. "Inform Vincent Arnaud," says he, "that I am the happier in my new

dignity, as it enables me to serve him. Let me have his son in pledge of our friendship, and I will charge myself with making his fortune." Accordingly, Arnaud's son went into the Morea; and the seraskier not only made him presents, but granted him privileges and advantages in trade, which soon put him in a way of acquiring an estate.

Topal Osman's parts and abilities soon raised him to a great command. He was made a bashaw of three tails, and beglerbeg of Romania, one of the greatest governments in the empire, and of the greatest importance, from its vicinity to Hungary.

His residence during his government was at Nyssa. In the year 1727, Vincent Arnaud and his son waited upon him there, and were received with the utmost tenderness. Laying aside the bashaw and governor, he embraced them, caused them to be served with sherbet and perfumes, and made them sit upon the same sopha with himself; an honour rarely bestowed by a bashaw of the first order, and hardly ever to a Christian. After these marks of distinction, he sent them away loaded with presents.

In the great revolution that happened at Constantinople, anno 1730, the Grand Vizir Ibrahim perished. The times were so tumultuary, that one and the same year had seen no fewer than three successive vizirs. In September 1731, Topal Osman was called from his government to fill this place; which being the highest in the Ottoman empire, and perhaps the highest that any subject in the world enjoys, is always dangerous, and was then greatly so. He no sooner arrived at Constantinople, to take possession of his dignity, than he desired the French Ambassador to inform his old benefactor of his advancement; and that he should hasten to Constantinople, while things re-

mained in the present situation; adding, that a grand vizir seldom kept long in his station.

In the month of January, 1732, Arnaud, with his son, arrived at Constantinople from Malta, bringing with him variety of presents, and twelve Turks whom he had ransomed from slavery. These, by command of the vizir, were ranged in order before him. Vincent Arnaud, now seventy-two years of age, with his son, were brought before Topal Osman, grand vizir of the Ottoman empire. He received them in the presence of the great officers of state with the utmost marks of affection. Then turning to those about him, and pointing to the ransomed Turks, "Behold," says he, "these your brethren, now enjoying the sweets of liberty, after having groaned in slavery: this Frenchman is their deliverer. I was myself a slave, loaded with chains, streaming with blood, and covered with wounds: this is the man who redeemed and saved me: this is my master and benefactor: to him I am indebted for life, liberty, fortune, and every thing I enjoy. Without knowing me, he paid for me a large ransom, sent me away upon my bare word, and gave me a ship to carry me. Where is there a Mussulman capable of such generosity?"

While Osman was speaking, all eyes were fixed upon Arnaud, who held the grand Vizir's hands closely locked between his own. The vizir then asked both father and son many questions concerning their situation and fortune, heard their answers with kindness and attention, and then ended with an Arabic sentence, ALLAH KERIM! (the providence of God is great!) He made before them the distribution of the presents they had brought; the greatest part of which he sent to the sultan, the sultana mother, and the Kisler Aga (chief of the

black eunuchs); upon which the two Frenchmen made their obeisance and retired.

After this ceremony was over, the son of the Grand Vizir took them to his apartments, where he treated them with great kindness. Some time before they left Constantinople, they had a conference in private with the vizir, who divested himself of all state and ceremony. He let them understand, that the nature of his situation would not permit him to do as he desired, since a minister ever appears in the eyes of many to do nothing without a view to his own particular interest; adding that a bashaw was lord and master of his own province; but that the Grand Vizir at Constantinople had a master greater than himself.

He caused them to be amply paid for the ransom of the Turks, and likewise procured them payment of a debt which they looked on as desperate. He also made them large presents in money, and gave them an order for taking a loading of corn at Salonica; which was likely to be very profitable, as the exportation of corn from that part had been for a long time prohibited.

As his gratitude was without bounds, his liberality was the same. His behaviour to his benefactor demonstrated that greatness of soul which displayed itself in every action of his life. And this behaviour must appear the more generous, when it is considered what contempt and aversion the prejudices of education create in a Turk against Christians.

The Marshal D'Armont, having taken Crodon, in Bretagne, during the league, gave orders to put every Spaniard to the sword who was found in that garrison. Though it was announced death to disobey the orders of the general, an English soldier ventured to save a Spaniard. The English-

man was arraigned for this offence before a court-martial, where he confessed the fact, and declared himself ready to suffer death, provided they would spare the life of the Spaniard. The Marshal being surprised at such a conduct, asked the soldier, how he came to be so much interested in the preservation of the Spaniard.—“Because, Sir,” replied he, “in a similar situation, he once saved my life.” The Marshal, greatly pleased with the goodness of the soldier’s heart, granted him pardon, saved the Spaniard’s life, and highly extolled them both.

IMPURITY.

SENTIMENTS.

She hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.—Her house is the way to Hell, going down to the chambers of Death.

CICERO says, “that there is not a more pernicious evil to a man than the lust of sensual pleasure, the fertile source of every detestable crime, and the peculiar enemy of the divine and immortal soul.”

If sensuality is pleasure, beasts are happier than men.

He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth.

Sensual pleasures enervate the soul, make fools of the wise, and cowards of the brave; a libertine life is not a life of liberty.

With assiduity and impudence men of all ages commence admirers; and it is not uncommon to hear one swear that he is expiring for love, when he is dying of old age. Can any thing be more infamous or degrading to human nature?

The libertine, or sensualist, is one of the lowest characters. To obtain his ends, he must become a liar, a reprobate, and, in short, a villain, that often breaks all the commands of God, before he can ruin the object he is in pursuit of. He does not rush to destruction alone, but, like his great original, drags others along with him to perdition.

Indulge not desire at the expense of the slightest

article of virtue; pass once its limits, and you fall headlong into vice.

EXAMPLES.

It has been remarked of Augustus Cæsar, that chastity was by no means his virtue; but if he cast his eye on a beautiful woman, though her husband were of the first quality in Rome, he would immediately send his officers to bring her to him, either by fair means or by force. The philosopher Athenodorus, who had formerly been preceptor to Tiberius, and was very intimate with Augustus, took the following method to reform this vice of the great man. When the emperor one day had sent a letter for a certain noble lady, of the house of the Camilli, the philosopher, fearing some disaster might ensue, (her family being very popular, and highly respected at Rome,) went before to the lady's palace; and acquainting the parties concerned with it, the husband, with boiling rage, threatened to stab the messengers of the emperor when they came. The prudent philosopher, however, appeased his resentment, and only desired a suit of the lady's apparel, which was granted him. He then put it on, and, hiding his sword under his robes, entered the litter, personating the lady. The messenger knew no other, and carried him instantly into the emperor's apartment; who, heightened with desire, made haste to open the litter himself, when Athenodorus, suddenly drawing his sword, leaped forth upon him, saying, "Thus mightest thou have been murdered. Wilt thou never leave a vice attended so evidently with much danger? Jealousy and rage might have armed a husband, or substituted an assassin, thus disguised, instead of thy faithful friend; who might have laid

hold of this opportunity to deprive the republic of so gracious a prince. But I have taken care of thy life; do thou henceforth take warning." The emperor, equally frightened and surprised, testified himself pleased with the philosopher's stratagem; gave him ten talents of gold, thanking him for so seasonable a correction; and it is said, that from that time he began to restrain his unlawful pleasures, and cultivate a life more decent and suitable to his exalted character.

A young Italian nobleman fell in love with a duchess of singular beauty, but knew not how to make her sensible of it: at length chance gave him an opportunity beyond his expectation. One evening, as he returned from hawking, he passed through the fields of the lady in question, bordering on the palace. The Duke, her husband, and she were walking together as the young lord came by. The Duke seeing his train, and what game they had been pursuing, asked him some questions concerning their sport, and, being of an hospitable disposition, invited him into his palace to partake of a collation. He accepted the offer; and here commenced an acquaintance, which in time made way for an assignation between the duchess and him. Accordingly, he was let into the garden one night, and conducted privately to her chamber, where she was beforehand ready to receive him. After some compliments, "my lord," said the duchess, "you are obliged to my husband for this favour; who, as soon as you were gone from our house, the first time we saw you, gave you such commendations as made me conceive an immediate passion for you."—"And is this true, madame?" demanded the young nobleman, in astonishment; "then, far be it from me to be so ungrateful to my friend." With that he re-

sumed his garments, which he had begun to throw by, and instantly took his leave.

But, of all the instances we can meet with, in reading or in life, where shall we find one so generous and honest, so noble and divine, as that of Joseph in Holy Writ? When his master had entrusted him so unreservedly, that, to speak in the emphatical manner of the Scripture, "He knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat," the amiable youth was so unhappy as to appear irresistibly beautiful to his mistress: but when this shameless woman proceeds to solicit him, how gallant, how glorious is his answer! "Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand: there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" The same arguments which a base mind would have made to itself for perpetrating the evil, namely free trust, full power, and immediate temptation, were, to this brave, this gallant man, the greatest motives for his forbearing it. He could do it with impunity to man; but he could not affront and presumptuously offend a just, a holy, and an avenging God.

It is surely matter of wonder, that these destroyers of innocence, though dead to all the higher sentiments of virtue and honour, are not restrained by compassion and humanity. To bring sorrow, confusion and infamy, into a family; to wound the heart of a tender parent, and stain the life of a poor, deluded young woman, with a dishonour which can never be wiped off, are circumstances, one would think, sufficient to check the most violent passion, in a heart that has the least tincture

of pity and good nature. To enforce these general reflections, we add the following anecdote, taken from a French author, and which refers to the Chevalier Bayard, a man of great valour, high reputation, and distinguished, amongst his contemporaries, by the appellation of "The knight without fear, and without reproach." "Our knight," says he, "was pretty much addicted to that most fashionable of all faults." One morning, as he was dressing, he ordered his lacquey to bring him home, in the evening, some victim of lawless passion. The fellow who was prompt to do evil, had, it seems, for some time, addressed himself to an old gentlewoman of decayed fortune, who had a young maiden to her daughter, of very great beauty, and not yet sixteen years of age. The mother's extreme poverty, and the insinuations of this artful pander, concerning the soft disposition and generosity of his master, made her, at length, consent to deliver up her daughter. But many were the entreaties and representations of the mother to gain her child's consent to an action which, she said, she abhorred, even while she exhorted her to it. "But my child," says she, "can you see your mother die for hunger?" The virgin argued no longer; but, bursting into tears, declared she would go any where. The lacquey conveyed her with great obsequiousness and secrecy to his master's lodgings, and placed her in a commodious apartment till he came home. The knight, at his return, was met by his lacquey, (with that saucy familiarity which vice never fails to inspire between ranks, however unequal,) who told him, with a diabolical exultation, "She is as handsome as an angel; but the fool has wept till her eyes are swelled and bloated: for she is a maiden and a gentlewoman."

With that he conducted his master to the room where she was, and retired. The knight, when he saw her bathed in tears, said with some surprise, "Don't you know, young woman, why you were brought hither?" The unhappy maid instantly fell on her knees, and, with many interruptions of sighs and tears, said to him, "Yes, Sir, too well, alas! I know why I am brought hither: my mother, to get bread for her and myself, has sent me: but would it might please heaven I could die, before I am added to the number of those miserable wretches who live without honour!" With this reflection, she wept anew, and beat her bosom. The knight stepping from her, said, "I am not so abandoned as to hurt your innocence against your will."—The novelty of the accident surprised him into virtue; and covering the young maid with a cloak, he led her to a relation's house, to whose care he recommended her for that night. The next morning he sent for her mother, and asked her if her daughter was the virtuous creature she so amiably appeared to be: the mother assured him of her spotless purity, till, at least, the late period when she delivered her up to his servant. "And are not you, then," cried the knight, "a wicked woman, to contrive the debauchery of your own child?" She held down her face with fear and shame, and, in her confusion, uttered some broken words concerning her poverty. "Far be it," said the chevalier, "that you should relieve yourself from want by a much greater evil! Your daughter is a fine young creature: do you know of none that ever spoke of her for a wife?" The mother answered, "there is an honest man in our neighbourhood that loves her, who has often said he would marry her with 200*l*." The knight ordered his man to reckon out that sum, with an ad-

dition of fifty, to buy the bride-clothes, and fifty more as a help to the mother. I appeal to all the libertines in town, whether the possession of mercenary beauty could give half the pleasure that this young gentleman enjoyed in the reflection of having relieved a miserable parent from guilt and poverty, an innocent virgin from public shame and ruin, and bestowing a virtuous wife upon an honest man. How noble an example is this to every generous mind ! and how consonant to the character of " that pure religion," which we are told " consists in visiting the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world."

We will close these anecdotes with a part of a letter inserted in the *Guardian*, (No. 123,) written in the character of a mother, to one in high rank, who had seduced and abused her daughter ; and which gives a very lively idea of the affliction which a good parent must suffer on so melancholy an occasion.

"My LORD,

"Last night I discovered the injury you have done to my daughter. Heaven knows how long and piercing a torment that short-lived, shameful pleasure of yours, must bring upon me ! upon me, from whom you never received any offence ! This consideration alone should have deterred a noble mind from so base and ungenerous an act. But, alas ! what is all the grief that must be my share, in comparison of that with which you have requited her by whom you have been obliged ? Loss of good name, anguish of heart, shame, and infamy, must inevitably fall upon her, unless she gets over them by what is much worse, open impudence, professed lewdness, and abandoned prostitution ! These are the returns you have made to her,

for putting in your power all her livelihood and dependance, her virtue and reputation. O, my lord, should my son have practised the like on one of your daughters; I know you swell with indignation at the very mention of it, and would think he deserved a thousand deaths, should he make such an attempt upon the honour of your family. 'Tis well, my lord. —And is then the honour of your daughter, (whom still, though it had been violated, you might have maintained in plenty, and even luxury,) of greater moment to her, than to my daughter hers, whose only sustenance it was? And must my son, void of all the advantages of a generous education, must he, I say, consider; and may your lordship be excused from all reflection? —Eternal contumely attend that guilty title which claims exemption from thought, and arrogates to its wearer the prerogative of brutes! Ever cursed be its false lustre which could dazzle my poor daughter to her undoing! Was it for this, that the exalted merits and godlike virtues of your great ancestor were honoured with a coronet, that it might be a pander to his posterity, and confer a privilege of dishonouring the innocent and defenceless? At this rate the laws of rewards should be inverted, and he who is generous and good should be made a beggar and a slave, that industry, and honest diligence may keep his posterity unspotted, and preserve them from ruining virgins, and making whole families unhappy. Wretchedness is now become my never-failing portion, &c. Thus have I given some vent to my sorrow; nor fear I to awaken you to repentance, so that your sin may be forgiven.

“My Lord,

“Your conscience will help you to my name.”

INTEMPERANCE.

SENTIMENTS.

*The sad effects of luxury are these ;
 We drink our poison, and we eat disease.
 Not so, O Temperance bland ; when ruled by thee,
 The brute's obedient, and the man is free :
 Soft are his slumbers, balmy is his rest,
 His veins not boiling from the midnight feast.
 'Tis to thy rules, bright Temperance ! we owe
 All pleasures which from health and strength can flow ;
 Vigour of body, purity of mind,
 Unclouded reason, sentiments refin'd ;
 Unmix'd, untainted joys, without remorse,
 The intemperate sensualist's never-failing curse.*

THE greatest pleasures of sense turn disgustful by excess.

THE gratification of desire is sometimes the worst thing that can befall us.

It was a maxim of Socrates, " that we ought to eat and drink, to live ; and not to live, in order to eat and drink."

Luxury may contribute to give bread to the poor ; but if there were no luxury there would be no poor.

Pride and luxury are the parents of impurity and idleness, and impurity is the parent of indigence.

Sensual enjoyment, when it becomes habitual, loses its relish, and is converted into a burden.

Be moderate in your pleasures, that your relish for them may continue.

Temperance is the preservation of the Dominion of soul over sense, of reason over passion.—The want of it destroys health, fortune, and conscience; robs us of personal elegance and domestic felicity: and, what is worst of all, it degrades our reason, and levels us with brutes.

Anacharsis, the Scythian, in order to deter young men from that voluptuousness which is ever attended with ill effects, applied his discourse to them in a parable; telling them that the vine of youthful gratification and intemperance had three branches, producing three clusters: “On the first,” says he, “grows pleasure; on the second, sottishness; and, on the third, sadness.”

To shew the dangers of intemperance, the catholic legends tell us of some hermit, to whom the devil gave his choice of three crimes; two of them of the most atrocious kind, and the other to be drunk. The poor saint chose the last, as the least of the three; but, when drunk, he committed the other two.

EXAMPLES.

One of the most celebrated poets has somewhere observed, that

Dull sleep instructs, nor sport vain dreams in vain.

The following may serve as an instance. Chremes, of Greece, though a young man, was very infirm and sickly, through a course of luxury and intemperance, and subject to those strange sort of fits which are called trances. In one of these, he thought a philosopher came to sup with him; who, out of all the dishes served up at the table, would only eat of one, and that the most simple; yet his

conversation was sprightly, his knowledge great, his countenance cheerful, and his constitution strong. When the philosopher took his leave, he invited Chremes to sup with him at a house in the neighbourhood: this also took place in his imagination; and he thought he was received with the most polite and affectionate tokens of friendship; but was greatly surprised, when supper came up, to find nothing but milk and honey, and a few roots dressed up in the plainest manner, to which cheerfulness and good sense were the only sauces. As Chremes was unused to this kind of diet, and could not eat, the philosopher ordered another table to be spread more to his taste; and immediately there succeeded a banquet, composed of the most artificial dishes that luxury could invent, with great plenty and variety of the richest and most intoxicating wines. These, too, were accompanied by damsels of the most bewitching beauty. And now Chremes gave a loose to his appetites, and every thing he tasted raised extasies beyond what he had ever known. During the repast, the damsels sung and danced to entertain him; their charms enchanted the enraptured guest, already heated with what he had drank; his senses were lost in extatic confusion; every thing around him seemed Elysium, and he was upon the point of indulging the most boundless freedom, when lo! on a sudden, their beauty, which was but a visor, fell off, and discovered to his view forms the most hideous and forbidding imaginable. Lust, revenge, folly, murder, meagre poverty, and frantic despair, now appeared in their most odious shapes, and the place instantly became the direct scene of misery and desolation. How often did Chremes wish himself far distant from such diabolical company! and how dread the fatal conse-

quence which threatened him on every side! His blood ran chill'd to his heart; his knees smote against each other with fear, and joy and rapture were turned into astonishment and horror. When the philosopher perceived that this scene had made a sufficient impression on his guest, he thus addressed him: "Know, Chremes, it is I, it is Æsculapius, who has thus entertained you; and what you have here beheld is the true image of the deceitfulness and misery inseparable from luxury and intemperance. Would you be happy, be temperate. Temperance is the parent of health, virtue, wisdom, plenty, and of every thing that can render you happy in this world, or the world to come. It is, indeed, the true luxury of life; for without it life cannot be enjoyed." This said, he disappeared; and Chremes, awaking, and instructed by the vision, altered his course of life, became frugal, temperate, industrious; and by that means so mended his health and estate, that he lived without pain, to a very old age, and was esteemed one of the richest, best, and wisest men in Greece.

Such is the beautiful moral drawn by the pen of elegant and instructive fiction; with which if there be any mind so insensible as not to be properly affected, let us only turn to that striking reality presented to us in the case of Lewis Cornaro. This gentleman was a Venetian of noble extraction, and memorable for having lived to an extreme old age; for he was above a hundred years old at the time of his death, which happened at Padua, in the year 1565. Amongst other little performances, he left behind him a piece, entitled, "Of the advantages of a Temperate Life;" of which we will here give our readers some account; not only because it will very well illustrate

the life and character of the author, but may possibly be of use to those who take the *summum bonum*, or chief good of life, to consist in good eating. He was moved, it seems, to compose this little piece at the request, and for the benefit of some ingenious young men, for whom he had a regard; and who, having long since lost their parents, and seeing him, then eighty-one years old, in a fine florid state of health, were desirous to know of him what it was that enabled him to preserve, as he did, a sound mind in a sound body, to so extreme an age. He describes to them, therefore, his whole manner of living, and the regimen he had always pursued, and was then pursuing. He tells them that, when he was young he was very intemperate; that his intemperance had brought upon him many and grievous disorders; that, from the thirty-fifth to the fortieth year of his age, he spent his nights and days in the utmost anxiety and pain; and that, in short, his life was grown a burthen to him. The physicians, however, as he relates, notwithstanding all the vain and fruitless efforts which they made to restore his health, told him that there was one method still remaining, which had never been tried, but which, if they could but prevail with him to use with perseverance, might free him, in time, from all his complaints; and that was, a temperate and regular way of living. They added, moreover, that, unless he resolved to apply instantly to it, his case would soon become desperate, and there would be no hopes at all of his recovery. Upon this, he immediately prepared himself for his new regimen: and now began to eat and drink nothing but what was proper for one in his weak habit of body; but this was at first very disagreeable to him. He often wanted to

live again in his old manner, and did, indeed, indulge himself in a freedom of diet, sometimes without the knowledge of his physicians; but, as he informs us, much to his own detriment and uneasiness. Driven, in the mean time, by the necessity of the thing, and resolutely exerting all the powers of his understanding, he at last grew confirmed in a settled and uninterrupted course of temperance; by virtue of which, as he assures us, all his disorders had left him in less than a year; and he had been a firm and healthy man, from thenceforward, till the time in which he wrote his treatise.

To show what security a life of temperance afforded against the ill consequences of hurts and disasters, he relates the following accident, which befel him when he was very old. One day, being out in his chariot, and his coachman driving somewhat faster than ordinary, he had the misfortune to be overturned, and dragged by the horses a considerable way upon the ground. His head, his arms, and his whole body, were very much bruised, and one of his ancles was put out of joint. In this condition he was carried home; and the physicians, seeing how grievously he had suffered, concluded it impossible that he should live three days to an end. They were, however, mistaken; for, by bleeding, and evacuating medicines, the usual method of treating persons in like cases, he presently recovered, and arrived at his former stability and firmness.

Some sensualists, as it appears, had objected to his abstemious manner of living; and, in order to evince the reasonableness of their own, had urged that it was not worth while to mortify one's appetites at such a rate for the sake of being old, since all that was life, after the age of sixty-five, could not properly be called a living life, but a dead life.

“ Now,” says he, “ to shew these gentlemen how much they are mistaken, I will briefly run over the satisfactions and pleasures, which I myself enjoy, in this eighty-third year of my age. In the first place, I am always well ; and so active withal, that I can, with ease, mount a horse upon a flat, or walk upon the tops of very high mountains. In the next place, I am always cheerful, pleasant, perfectly contented, and free from all perturbation, and every uneasy thought. I have none of that *fastidium vitæ*, that satiety of life, so often to be met with in persons of my age. I frequently converse with men of parts and learning, and spend much of my time in reading and writing. These things I do just as opportunity serves, or my humour invites me, and all in my own house at Padua. I frequently make excursions to some of the neighbouring cities, for the sake of seeing my friends, and conversing with adepts in all arts and sciences ; architects, painters, statuaries, musicians, and even husbandmen. I contemplate their works, compare them with the ancients, and am always learning something which it is agreeable to know. I take a view of palaces, gardens, antiquities, public buildings, temples, fortifications, and endeavour to let nothing escape me which may afford the least amusement to a rational mind. Nor are these pleasures at all blunted by the usual imperfections of great age ; for I enjoy all my senses in perfect vigour ; my taste especially, in so high a degree, that I have a better relish for the plainest food now, than I had for the choicest delicacies formerly, when immersed in a life of luxury. Nay, to let you see what a portion of fire and spirit I have still left within me, be pleased to know that I have, this very year, written a comedy full of innocent

mirth and pleasantry ; and, as I say, if a Greek poet was thought so healthy and happy for writing a tragedy at the age of seventy-three, why should not I be thought as healthy and as happy, who have written a comedy when I am ten years older? In short, that no pleasure whatever may be wanting to my old age, I please myself daily with contemplating that immortality which I think I see in the succession of my posterity. For, every time I return home, I meet eleven grandchildren, all the offspring of one father and mother ; all in fine health ; all, as far as I can discern, apt to learn, and of a good behaviour. I am often amused by their singing ; nay, I often sing with them, because my voice is stronger and clearer now than ever it was in my life before. These are the delights and comforts of my old age ; from which, I presume, it appears that the life I spend is not a dead, morose, and melancholy life ; but a living, active, pleasant life, which I would not exchange with the most robust of those youths, who indulge and riot in all the luxury of the senses, because I know them to be exposed to a thousand diseases, and a thousand kinds of death. I, on the contrary, am free from all such apprehensions ; from the apprehensions of disease, because I have nothing in my constitution for a disease to feed upon ; from the apprehensions of death, because I have spent a life of reason. Besides, death, I am persuaded, is not yet near me. I know that, barring accidents, no violent disease can touch me. I must be dissolved by a gentle and gradual decay, when the radical humour is consumed, like oil in a lamp, which affords no longer life to the dying taper. But such a death as this cannot happen of a sudden. To become unable to walk and reason, to

become blind, deaf, and bent to the earth, from all which evils I am far remote at present, must take a considerable portion of time; and I verily believe, that the immortal soul, which still inhabits my body with so much harmony and complacency, will not easily depart from it yet. I verily believe, that I have many years to live, many years to enjoy the world and its blessings, by virtue of that strict sobriety and temperance which I have so long and so religiously observed; friend as I am to reason, but a foe to sense." Thus far this good and wise philosopher, who was known afterwards to have prophesied very truly concerning his future health and happiness.

It is said of Diogenes, that meeting a young man who was going to a feast, he took him up in the street, and carried him home to his friends, as one who was running into imminent danger, had he not prevented him. What would that philosopher have said, had he been present at the gluttony of a modern meal? would not he have thought the master of a family mad, and have begged his servants to tie down his hands, had he seen him devour fowl, fish, and flesh; swallow oil and vinegar, wines and spices; throw down salads of twenty different herbs, sauces of a hundred ingredients, confections and fruits of numberless sweets and flavours? What unnatural motions and counterferments must such a medley of intemperance produce in the body! for my own part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy I see gout and dropsies, fevers and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers, lying in ambuscade amongst the dishes.

Nothing can be more worthy a serious perusal than the latter part of the 23d chapter of Proverbs, to guard men against the odious vice of drunken-

ness. In verse 33, &c. the writer bids us mark the particular ill effects of it. "Thine eyes," says he, "shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth on the top of a mast." That is, "Thou wilt sottishly run thyself into the extremest hazards, without any apprehensions of danger; being no more able to direct thy course, than a pilot who slumbers when the ship is tossed in the midst of the sea; no more able to take notice of the perils thou art in, than he who falls asleep on the top of a mast, where he was set to keep watch." He goes on, "They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." There is great beauty and energy in the conciseness of the original. What we render, "I was not sick," should rather be, "and I was not sensible of it." The next clause should be, "They have mocked me, and I knew it not."—"They have stricken me, and I was not sensible of it; they have mocked me, and I knew it not." How striking and instructive a portrait is this of the stupid insensibility of a drunkard! Mr. Prior, in his Solomon, has well expressed it in the following lines. There are, says he,

— Yet unnumbered ills that lie unseen
 In the pernicious draught: the word obscene,
 Or harsh, (which once elanc'd, must ever fly
 Irrevocable;) the too prompt reply,
 Seed of severe distrust, and fierce debate,
 What we should shun, and what we ought to hate.
 Add too, the blood impoverish'd, and the course
 Of health suppress'd by wine's continued force.
 Unhappy man! whom sorrow thus, and rage,
 To different ills alternately engage.

*Who drinks, alas! but to forget; nor sees
That melancholy sloth, severe disease,
Memory confus'd, and interrupted thought,
Death's harbingers, lie latent in the draught;
And in the flowers that wreath the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and poisonous serpents roll."*

If there was ever a man who in a worldly sense "strove for the mastery," it was Charles the Twelfth of Sweden; and accordingly his history tells us, that he was remarkably "temperate," in order to the attainment of his end: even his boisterous and romantic character therefore may edify and improve wiser and better minds. "The earlier days of his administration," says Voltaire, "gave no favourable ideas of him; it seemed as if he had been more impatient to reign than worthy of it. He had indeed no dangerous passion: but nothing was to be seen in his conduct, but the sallies of youthful impetuosity and obstinacy. He appeared quite careless and haughty. The ambassadors from other courts even took him for a very moderate genius, and painted him as such to their several masters. Sweden too had the same opinion of him; and nobody knew his real character. Nor did he know it himself, till the sudden storms that burst forth in the northern world gave his hidden talents an opportunity of displaying themselves. But then every one was in the highest degree surprised, to see him instantaneously renounce all, even the most innocent, amusements of his youthful days. From the moment he prepared for war, he commenced a life entirely new, from which he never after varied in the least. Full of the idea of Alexander and of Cæsar, he purposed to imitate in those conquerors every thing but their vices. He no longer consulted magnificence, or regarded sports or relaxations; he reduced his table

to the exactest frugality. He had hitherto been fond of splendor in his apparel; from henceforward he dressed himself only as a common soldier. He had been suspected of having entertained a passion for a lady of his court; but, whether this circumstance be true or not, it is certain that from henceforth he for ever renounced the sex; not merely for fear of being governed by them, but to set an example to his soldiers, whom he wished to preserve in the strictest discipline; and, perhaps, also from a vanity of being the only king who had conquered a propensity so difficult to subdue. He likewise resolved to abstain from wine all the rest of his life; not, as some have pretended, because he would punish in himself an excess, which was said to have led him into actions unworthy of his character, (for nothing is more false than this popular report,) but because it too much stimulated his fiery temper: nay, he even quitted beer, and reduced himself to pure water. To crown the whole, we must remember that sobriety was then a virtue entirely new in the north, and therefore Charles was determined to be a pattern to his Swedes in every particular."

Sully, the great statesman of France, kept up always at his table at Villebon the frugality to which he had been accustomed in early life in the army. His table consisted of a few dishes, dressed in the plainest and most simple manner. The courtiers reproached him often with the simplicity of his table. He used to reply, in the words of an ancient, "If the guests are men of sense, there is sufficient for them; if they are not, I can very well dispense with their company."



O worthy Duke ;
Hear me yourself; for that which I must speak,
Must either punish me, not being belov'd,
Or wring redress from you: hear me, O hear me !

SHAKSPERE.

JUSTICE.

SENTIMENTS.

*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you,
do ye even so unto them.*

As to be perfectly just is an attribute of the divine nature, so to be just to the utmost of our abilities is the glory of a man.

The defending of a bad cause is worse than the cause itself.

He that passeth a sentence hastily, looks as if he did it willingly; and then there is an injustice in the excess.

Fidelity and truth are the foundation of all justice.

Justice may be defined that virtue which impels to give every person what is his due ; and comprehends the practice of every virtue which reason prescribes, or society should expect. Our duty to our Maker, to each other, and to ourselves, is fully answered, if we give them what we owe them.

EXAMPLES.

Mahomet, the Second of that name, emperor of the Turks, had a son called Mustapha, whom he had designed to succeed him in the empire, prone to lust, but otherwise a good prince. The young prince had fallen in love with the wife of Achmet Bassa, a woman of excellent beauty. He had long endeavoured to prevail with her by all sorts of allurements ; but this way not succeeding, he would try by surprise. He had gained a knowledge of the time when the woman went to bathe herself (as the Turks often do). He soon followed her, with a few of his retinue, and there seized her naked, as she was, and, in despite of all the resistance she could make, ravished her. She told her husband, he the emperor, and desired justice. The emperor at first seemed to take little notice of it ; but soon after, though he had different sentiments in his mind, he rated the bassa with sharp language. "What," says he, "dost thou think it meet to complain thus grievously of my son? Knowest thou not that both thyself and that wife of thine are my slaves, and accordingly at my disposal ? If, therefore, my son has embraced her, and followed the inclinations of his mind, he has embraced but a slave of mine, and having my approbation he hath committed no fault at all : think of this, go thy way, and leave the rest to myself." This he said in defence of his absolute empire ; but,

illsatisfied in his mind, and vexed at the thing, he sent for his son, examined him touching the fact, and, having confessed it, dismissed with him threats. Three days after, when paternal love to his son and justice had striven in his breast, love to justice having gained the superiority and victory, he commanded his mutes to strangle his son Mustapha with a bowstring, that, by his death, he might make amends to injured and violated chastity.

Diocles, having made a law, that no man should come armed into the public assembly of the people; he, through inadvertency, chanced to break that law himself; which one observing, and saying "he has broken a law he made himself," Diocles turning to his accuser, said, with a loud voice, "No the law shall have its due;" and, drawing his sword, killed himself.

A gentleman sent a buck to Judge Hales in his circuit, having a cause to be tried before him that assize. The cause being called, and the judge taking notice of the name, asked, "If he was not the person who had presented him with a buck?" and finding it to be the same, the judge told him, "He could not suffer the trial to go on till he had paid for his buck." To which the gentleman answered, "That he never sold his venison; and that he had done no more to him than what he had always done to every judge that came that circuit." This was confirmed by several gentlemen on the bench. But all this would not prevail upon the judge; nor would he suffer the trial to proceed till he had paid for the venison.

A certain poor woman having lost a little dog, and understanding it to be in the possession of the lady of Sir Thomas More, to whom it had been made a present of, she went to Sir Thomas, as he was sitting in the hall, and told him, "That his

lady withheld her dog from her." Sir Thomas immediately ordered his lady to be sent for, and the dog to be brought with her; which Sir Thomas taking in his hands, caused his lady to stand at one end of the hall, and the poor woman at the other, and said, "That he sat there to do every one justice." He bid each of them call the dog; which, when they did, the dog forsook the lady, and went to the poor woman. When Sir Thomas saw this, he bid his lady be contented, for it was none of hers. But she repining at the sentence, the dog was purchased of the poor woman for a piece of gold, and so all parties were satisfied, every one smiling at the manner of his inquiring out the truth.

At the time that Oliver Cromwell was protector of this realm, an English merchant-ship was taken in the chops of the Channel, carried into St. Maloes, and there confiscated upon some groundless pretence. As soon as the master of the ship, who was an honest Quaker, got home, he presented a petition to the protector in council, setting forth his case, and praying for redress. Upon hearing the petition, the protector told his council, "he would take that affair upon himself." and ordered the man to attend him the next morning. He examined him strictly as to all the circumstances of his case; and finding by his answers that he was a plain, honest man, and that he had been concerned in no unlawful trade, he asked him, "If he could go to Paris with a letter?" The man answered "he could."—"Well then," said the protector, "prepare for your journey, and come to me to-morrow morning." Next morning he gave him a letter to Cardinal Mazarine, and told him he must stay but three days for an answer. "The answer I mean," says he, "is the full value of

what you might have made of your ship and cargo ; and tell the cardinal, that if it be not paid you in three days, you have express orders from me to return home." The honest, blunt Quaker, we may suppose, followed his instructions to a tittle ; but the cardinal, according to the manner of ministers when they are any way pressed, began to shuffle : therefore the Quaker returned, as he was bid. As soon as the protector saw him, he asked, " Well, friend, have you got your money ?" And upon the man's answering, he had not, the protector told him, " Then leave your direction with my secretary, and you shall soon hear from me." Upon this occasion, that great man did not stay to negotiate, or to explain, by long, tedious memorials, the reasonableness of his demand. No ; though there was a French minister residing here, he did not so much as acquaint him with the story ; but immediately sent a man of war or two, with orders to seize every French ship they could meet with. Accordingly they returned in a few days with two or three French prizes, which the protector ordered to be immediately sold ; and out of the produce he paid the Quaker what he demanded for the ship and cargo. He then sent for the French minister, gave him an account of what had happened, and told him there was a balance, which, if he pleased, should be paid to him, to the end that he might deliver it to those of his countrymen who were the owners of the French ships that had been so taken and sold.

Zaleucus, lawgiver of the Locrians, made a law that adultery should be punished with the loss of both the offender's eyes ; and it fell out so unhappily, that his own son was the first who committed that crime ; and that he might at once express the tenderness of a father, and the up-

rightness of a judge, he caused one of his son's eyes to be put out, and one of his own.

Alexander Severus, one of the Roman emperors, instead of leaving the management of his troops to the vigilance of his officers, took the pains, in all his military expeditions, to visit the tents himself, and inquire if any of the soldiers were absent. If he found they were, and, as generally happens in such cases, they had left the camp only to plunder the country, he never failed to chastise their rapacity, either by some corporeal punishment, or a fine, or, at least, by a severe reprimand, which he always concluded, with asking them, "if they would like to be plundered in the same manner?" It was likewise his custom, whenever he punished an offender, as well against the civil as the military law, to address the sufferer either in person, or by the officer who was to see the sentence executed, with this equitable caution:—*Do nothing to another which you would be unwilling should be done to yourself.* For this golden rule, which he borrowed from the Christians, he had such an uncommon veneration, that he ordered it to be engraved in large capitals over the gate of his palace, and on the doors of many other public buildings.

Themistocles once declared, in a full assembly of the people, that he had a project to propose, of the greatest public utility; but that he could not communicate it to the citizens at large, because the success of it depended much on the secrecy with which it was executed. He therefore requested they would appoint a person to whom he might explain himself without any danger of discovery. Aristides (who was so much distinguished for his integrity, that he received the glorious surname of the Just,) was the person fixed upon for

that purpose by the whole assembly. They had so great a confidence in his prudence and honesty, that they referred the matter entirely to his opinion. Themistocles, therefore, having taken him aside, informed him, that the project he had conceived, was to burn the fleet of the Grecian states, which then lay in a neighbouring port, called the Piræus; adding that, by this means, Athens would become absolute mistress of the sea, and the umpire of all Greece. After this explanation, Aristides returned to the assembly, and assured them that nothing could be more beneficial to the republic than the project of Themistocles, but, at the same time, that nothing could be more unjust and dishonourable. On hearing this, the people unanimously voted, that Themistocles should desist from his project. This story is the more remarkable, as it was not a company of philosophers, but a whole state, who issued an order by which they deprived themselves of a very considerable advantage, because the means of obtaining it were not agreeable to the rigid dictates of justice.

Philip, King of Macedon, being urged to interpose his credit and authority with the judges, in behalf of one of his attendants, whose reputation, it was said, would be totally ruined by a regular course of justice, "Very probably," replied the king: but of the two, I had rather he should lose *his* reputation than I *mine*."—Upon another occasion, being solicited by his courtiers to dismiss a person of merit, who had spoken of him somewhat slightly, "Perhaps," said he, "I have given him a sufficient reason." Hearing, soon after, that the man was in low circumstances, and greatly persecuted by the courtiers, he relieved him in a very liberal manner. This alteration of behaviour soon changed the other's reproaches into the warmest

and most sincere applause; which Philip being informed of, "How great," said he, "is the power of justice! By the practice or neglect of it, a king may make himself either beloved or hated!"

Cambyzes, one of the Kings of Persia, who was famous for his unalterable regard to justice, had a particular favourite whom he raised to the office of a judge: but the ungrateful wretch, depending upon the credit he had with his master, prostituted the honour of his government, and the rights and properties of his fellow-subjects, in such a daring manner, that causes were bought and sold in the courts of judicature as openly as provisions in the market. Avarice was the ruling passion of his soul, and those who would gratify it with the richest oblations were always certain of gaining their suit. When Cambyzes was informed of this, he was so much exasperated, that he not only ordered him to be seized, and publicly degraded, but to have his skin stripped over his ears, and the seat of judgment to be covered with it, as a warning to others. To convince the world that he was influenced to this extraordinary act of severity by no other motive than the love of justice, he afterwards appointed the son to succeed to the office of his father.

Caius Lucius, the nephew of the famous Caius Marius, a Roman Consul, having attempted the most infamous debauchery upon a young soldier of great personal beauty, whose name was Trebonius, the gallant youth, being fired with indignation at the scandalous insult which was offered him, stabbed the villain to the heart. As Lucius was a military tribune, his death made a great noise; but the consul, though much affected with the loss of his nephew, and warmly solicited by his flatterers to punish Trebonius as a daring mu-

tineer, not only acquitted him, but rewarded his courage, by placing upon his head, with his own hand, one of those honorary crowns which were bestowed upon soldiers who had signalized themselves by some uncommon act of bravery. The whole army applauded the justice of their general; and the news being afterwards carried to Rome, the people were so highly pleased with it, that Marius was chosen consul the next year, and honoured with the command of the army in Transalpine Gaul.

When Charles, duke of Burgundy, surnamed the Bold, reigned over spacious dominions, now swallowed up by the power of France, he heaped many favours and honours upon Claudius Rhynsault, a German, who had served him in his wars against the insults of his neighbours. A great part of Zealand was, at that time, in subjection to that dukedom. The prince himself was a person of singular humanity and justice. Rhynsault, with no other real quality than courage, had dissimulation enough to pass upon his generous and unsuspecting master for a person of blunt honesty and fidelity, without any vice that could bias him from the execution of justice. His highness, prepossessed to his advantage, upon the decease of the governor of his chief town of Zealand, gave Rhynsault that command. He was not long seated in that government, before he cast his eyes upon Sapphira, a woman of exquisite beauty, the wife of Paul Danvelt, a wealthy merchant of the city under his protection and government. Rhynsault was a man of warm constitution, and violent inclination to women, and not unskilled in the soft arts which win their favour. He knew what it was to enjoy the satisfactions which are reaped from the possession of beauty; but was an utter

stranger to the decencies, honours and delicacies that attend the passion towards them in elegant minds. However, he had seen so much of the world, that he had a great share of the language which usually prevails upon the weaker part of that sex, and he could with his tongue utter a passion with which his heart was wholly untouched. He was one of those brutal minds which can be gratified with the violation of innocence and beauty, without the least pity, passion, or love to that with which they are so much delighted. Ingratitude is a vice inseparable to a lustful man; and the possession of a woman, by him who has no thought but allaying a passion painful to himself, is necessarily followed by distaste and aversion. Rhynsault, being resolved to accomplish his will on the wife of Danvelt, left no art untried to get into a familiarity at her house: but she knew his character and disposition too well, not to shun all occasions that might ensnare her into his conversation. The governor, despairing of success by ordinary means, apprehended and imprisoned her husband, under pretence of an information that he was guilty of a correspondence with the enemies of the duke, to betray the town into their possession. This design had its desired effect; and the wife of the unfortunate Danvelt, the day before that which was appointed for his execution, presented herself in the hall of the governor's house, and, as he passed through the apartment, threw herself at his feet, and, holding his knees, besought his mercy. Rhynsault beheld her with a dissembled satisfaction, and assuming an air of thought and authority, he bid her arise, and told her she must follow him to his closet; and asking her whether she knew the hand-writing of the letter he pulled out of his pocket, went from her, leaving

this admonition aloud: "If you will save your husband, you must give an account of all you know, without prevarication; for every body is satisfied he was too fond of you to be able to hide from you the names of the conspirators, or any other particulars whatsoever." He went to his closet, and soon after the lady was sent to for an audience. The servant knew his distance when matters of state were to be debated; and the governor, laying aside the air with which he appeared in public, began to be the suppliant, to rally an affliction which it was in her power easily to remove, and relieve an innocent man from his imprisonment. She easily perceived his intention, and bathed in tears, began to deprecate so wicked a design. Lust, like ambition, takes all the faculties of the mind and body into its service and subjection. Her becoming tears, her honest anguish, the wringing of her hands, and the many changes of her posture and figure in the vehemence of speaking, were but so many attitudes in which he beheld her beauty, and further incentives of his desire. All humanity was lost in that one appetite; and he signified to her in so many plain terms, that he was unhappy till he had possessed her, that nothing less should be the price of her husband's life; and that she must, before the following noon, pronounce the death or enlargement of Danvelt. After this notification, when he saw Sapphira again enough distracted to make the subject of their discourse to common eyes appear different from what it was, he called his servant to conduct her to the gate. Loaded with insupportable affliction, she immediately repaired to her husband: and having signified to his jailors, that she had a proposal to make to her husband from the governor, she was left alone with him, revealed to

him all that had passed, and represented the endless conflict she was in between love to his person, and fidelity to his bed. It is easy to imagine the sharp affliction this honest pair were in upon such an incident, in lives not used to any but ordinary occurrences. The man was bridled by shame from speaking what his fear prompted upon so near an approach to death; but let fall words that signified to her that he should not think her polluted, though she had not yet confessed to him that the governor had violated her person, since he knew her will had no part in the action. She parted from him with this oblique permission to save a life he had not resolution enough to resign for the safety of his honour.

The next morning the unhappy Sapphira attended the governor, and, being led into a remote apartment, submitted to his desires. Rhynsault commended her charms, claimed a familiarity after what had passed between them, and, with an air of gaiety, in the language of a gallant, bid her return and take her husband out of prison: "But," continued he, "my fair one must not be offended, that I have taken care he shall not be an interruption to any of our future assignations." These words foreboded what she found when she came to the jail—her husband executed by the order of Rhynsault!

It was remarkable that the woman, who was full of tears and lamentations during the whole course of her afflictions, uttered neither sigh nor complaint, but stood fixed with grief at this consummation of her misfortunes. She betook herself to her abode, and after having in solitude paid her devotion to him who is the avenger of innocence, she repaired privately to court. Her person, and a certain grandeur of sorrow, negligent of

forms, gained her a passage into the presence, of the duke, her sovereign, she broke forth in the following words, "Behold, O mighty Charles! a wretch weary of life, though it has always been spent with innocence and virtue! It is not in your power to redress my injuries, but it is to avenge them; and, if the protection of the distressed, and the punishment of oppressors, is a task worthy a prince, I bring the Duke of Burgundy ample matter for doing honour to his own great name, and wiping infamy from mine."

When she had spoken thus, she delivered the duke a paper reciting her story. He read it with all the emotions that indignation and pity could raise in a prince jealous of his honour in the behaviour of his officers, and prosperity of his subjects.

Upon an appointed day Rhynsault was sent for to court, and, in the presence of a few of the council, confronted by Sapphira; the prince asking, "Do you know that lady?" Rhynsault, as soon as he could recover his surprise, told the duke he would marry her, if his highness would please to think that a reparation. The duke seemed contented with this answer, and stood by during the immediate solemnization of the ceremony. At the conclusion of it, he told Rhynsault, "Thus far you have done as constrained by my authority; I shall not be satisfied of your kind usage of her, without you sign a gift of your whole estate to her, after your decease." To the performance of this also the duke was a witness. When these two acts were performed, the duke turned to the lady, and told her, "It now remains for me to put you in quiet possession of what your husband has so bountifully bestowed on you;" and ordered the immediate execution of Rhynsault!

LYING.

SENTIMENTS.

*Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord: but
such as speak truly are his delight.*

NOTHING appears so low and mean as lying and dissimulation. It is a vice so very infamous, that the greatest liars cannot bear it in any other men.

A liar is subject to two misfortunes; neither to believe, nor to be believed; and before he establishes one lie he must tell many. There cannot be a greater treachery, than first to raise a confidence, and then to betray it.

When a man forfeits the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast: and nothing will then serve his turn; neither truth nor falsehood.

Truth is so great a perfection, says Pythagoras, that if God would render himself visible to man, he would choose light for his body, and truth for his soul.

Truth is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out. It is always near at hand, sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware; whereas a lie is troublesome, and sets a man's imagination upon the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is like building upon a false foundation, which continually stands in need of props to keep it up, and proves at last more chargeable than to have raised a substantial building at first upon a true and solid foundation: for sincerity is firm and sub-

stantial, there is nothing hollow or unsound in it, and, because it is plain and open, fears no discovery, of which the crafty man is always in danger; and when he thinks he walks in the dark, all his pretences are so *transparent*, that he that runs may read them; he is the last man that finds himself to be found out; and while he takes it for granted that he makes fools of others, he renders himself ridiculous.

EXAMPLES.

It is said of Augustus Cæsar, that, after a long inquiry into all the parts of his empire, he found but one man who was accounted never to have told a lie: for which cause he was deemed worthy to be the chief sacrificer in the Temple of Truth.

Epaminondas, the Theban general, was so great a lover of truth, that he was ever careful lest his tongue should in the least digress from it, even when he was most in sport.

Cato the younger charged Muræna, and indicted him in open court for popularity and ambition, declaring against him, that he sought indirectly to gain the people's favour, and their voices, to be chosen consul. As he went up and down to collect arguments and proof thereof, according to the manner and customs of the Romans, he was attended upon by certain persons who followed him in behalf of the defendant, to observe what was done, for his better instruction in the process and suit commenced. These men would oftentimes converse with Cato, and ask him, whether he would to-day search for aught, or negotiate any thing in the matter and cause concerning Muræna? If he said, "No," such credit and trust they reposed in the veracity of the man, they would rest in that

answer and go their ways. A singular proof this was of the reputation he had gained, and the great and good opinion men had conceived of him concerning his love of truth.

Xenocrates, an Athenian philosopher, lived 300 years before Christ, and was educated in the school of Plato. The people of Athens entertained so high an opinion of his probity, that one day when he approached the altar, to confirm by an oath the truth of what he asserted, the judges unanimously declared his word to be sufficient evidence.

The duke of Ossuna, as he passed by Barcelona, having got leave to relieve some slaves, went aboard the Cape galley, and passing through the slaves, he asked divers of them what their offences were. Every one excused himself: one saying, that he was put in out of malice; another by bribery of the judge; but all of them unjustly. Among the rest, there was one little sturdy black man, and the duke asked him what he was in for? "Sir," said he, "I cannot deny but I am justly put in here; for I wanted money, and so took a purse near Tarragona, to keep me from starving." The duke, with a little staff he had in his hand, gave him two or three blows upon the shoulders, saying, "You rogue, what do you do among so many honest, innocent men? Get you gone out of their company." So he was freed, and the rest remained to tug at the oar.

"I remember," says Lord Herbert, "that at the time I was about seven years old, I was corrected for going to cuffs with two school-fellows, being both older than myself; but never for telling a lie, or any other fault; my natural disposition and inclination being so contrary to all falsehood, that being demanded whether I had committed any

fault, whereof I might justly be suspected, I did use ever to confess it freely; and thereupon choosing rather to suffer correction than to stain my mind with telling a lie, which I did adjudge then no time could ever efface; and I can affirm to all the world truly, that from my first infancy to this hour, I told not willingly any thing that was false, my soul naturally having an antipathy to lying and deceit."

Petrarch, a celebrated Italian poet, who flourished above 400 years ago, recommended himself to the confidence and affection of Cardinal Colonna, in whose family he resided, by his candour and strict regard to truth. A violent quarrel occurred in the household of this nobleman, which was carried so far, that recourse was had to arms. The cardinal wished to know the foundation of this affair; and, that he might be able to decide with justice, he assembled all his people, and obliged them to bind themselves by a most solemn oath on the gospels, to declare the whole truth. Every one, without exception, submitted to this determination; even the Bishop of Luna, brother to the cardinal, was not excused. Petrarch, in his turn, presenting himself to take the oath, the cardinal closed the book, and said, "As to you, Petrarch, your word is sufficient."

A pretender to literature, having once owned a copy of verses which Lord Somers wrote, was asked by his lordship, when he was presented to him as lord chancellor, whether he was really the author of the lines in question. "Yes, my lord," replied the pretended poet. "It is a trifle; I did it off-hand." On hearing this, Lord Somers burst into a loud fit of laughter, and the gentleman withdrew in the greatest confusion.

To show us how incompatiable true courage is

with the least degree of falsehood, the invincible Achilles, the hero of the Iliad, is introduced by Homer as saying these memorable words, "I detest, as the gates of hell itself, the wretch who has the baseness to mean one thing and speak another."

When Aristotle was asked, what a man could gain by telling a falsehood?—"Not to be credited," said he, "when he speaks the truth."

Appollonius, another philosopher, used to say, "That the wretch who has been mean enough to be guilty of a lie, has forfeited every claim to the character of a gentleman, and degraded himself to the rank of a slave."

Our ingenious countryman, Sir Thomas Brown, has expressed himself in still more remarkable terms: "The very devils," says he, "do not tell lies to one another; for truth is necessary to all societies, nor can the society of hell subsist without it."

Dr. Hawkesworth exhibits the folly of this practice in a very interesting manner.—"Almost every other vice," says that excellent writer, "may be kept in countenance by applause and association; and even the robber and the cut-throat have their followers, who admire their address and intrepidity, their stratagems of rapine, and their fidelity to the gang: but the liar, and only the liar, is universally despised, abandoned and disowned. He has no domestic consolations, which he can oppose to the censure of mankind. He can retire to no fraternity, where his crimes may stand in the place of virtues; but is given up to the hisses of the multitude, without a friend, and without an apologist."

Mendaculus was a youth of good parts, and of amiable disposition; but, by keeping bad company, he had contracted, in an extreme degree, the odious practice of lying. His word was scarcely ever be-

lieved by his friends ; and he was often suspected of faults, because he denied the commission of them, and punished for offences of which he was convicted only by his assertions of innocence. The experience of every day manifested the disadvantages which he suffered from this habitual violation of truth. He had a garden, stocked with the choicest flowers ; and the cultivation of it was his favourite amusement. It happened that the cattle of the adjoining pasture had broken down the fence ; and he found them trampling upon and destroying a bed of fine auriculas. He could not drive these ravagers away, without endangering the still more valuable productions of the next parterre ; and he hastened to request the assistance of the gardener. “ You intend to make a fool of me,” said the man, who refused to go, as he gave no credit to the relation of Mendaculus. One frosty day, his father had the misfortune to be thrown from his horse, and to fracture his thigh. Mendaculus was present, and was deeply affected by the accident, but had not strength to afford the necessary help. He was therefore obliged to leave him, in this painful condition, on the ground, which was at that time covered with snow ; and with all the expedition in his power, he rode to Manchester, to solicit the aid of the first benevolent person he should meet with. His character, as a liar, was generally known ; few to whom he applied paid attention to his story ; and no one believed it. After losing much time in fruitless entreaties, he returned with a sorrowful heart, and with his eyes bathed in tears, to the place where the accident happened. But his father was removed from thence : a coach fortunately passed that way ; he was taken into it, and conveyed to his own house, whither Mendaculus soon

followed him. A lusty boy, of whom Mendaculus had told some falsehood, often waylaid him as he went to school, and beat him with great severity. Conscious of his ill desert, Mendaculus bore, for some sime, in silence, this chastisement; but the frequent repetition of it, at last overpowered his resolution, and he complained to his father of the usage he met with. His father, though dubious of the truth of this account, applied to the parents of the boy who abused him. But he could obtain no redress from them, and only received the following painful answer:—"Your son is a notorious liar, and we pay no regard to his assertions." Mendaculus was therefore obliged to submit to the wonted correction till full satisfaction had been taken by his antagonist for the injury which he had sustained. Such were the evils in which this unfortunate youth almost daily involved himself by the habit of lying. He was sensible of his misconduct, and began to reflect upon it with seriousness and contrition. Resolutions of amendment succeeded to penitence; he set a guard upon his words; spoke little, and always with caution and reserve; and he soon found by sweet experience, that truth is more easy and natural than falsehood. By degrees, the love of it became predominant in his mind; and so sacred at length did he hold veracity to be, that he scrupled even the least jocular violation of it. This happy change restored him to the esteem of his friends, the confidence of the public, and the peace of his own conscience.

PASSION.

SENTIMENT.

Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.

PASSION is a fever of the mind, which ever leaves us weaker than it found us. It is the threshold of madness and insanity: indeed, they are so much alike, that they sometimes cannot be distinguished; and their effects are often equally fatal.

The first step to moderation is to perceive that we are falling into a passion. It is much easier wholly to prevent ourselves from falling into a passion, than to keep it within just bounds; that which few can moderate, almost any body may prevent.

Envy and wrath shorten life; and anxiety bringeth age before its time. We ought to distrust our passions, even when they appear the most reasonable.

Who overcomes his passion, overcomes his strongest enemy. If we do not subdue our anger, it will subdue us.

A passionate temper renders a man unfit for advice, deprives him of reason, robs him of all that is great or noble in his nature, destroys friendship, changes justice into cruelty, and turns all order into confusion.

EXAMPLES.

Augustus, who was prone to anger, received the following letter from Athenodorus, the philosopher: That, so soon as he should feel the first emotion towards anger, he should repeat deliberately all the letters of the alphabet; for that anger was easily prevented, but not so easily subdued. To repress anger, it is a good method to turn the injury into a jest. Socrates having received a blow on the head, observed, that it would be well if people knew when it were necessary to put on a helmet. Being kicked by a boisterous fellow, and his friends wondering at his patience, "What!" said he, "if an ass should kick me, must I call him before a judge?" Being attacked with opprobrious language, he calmly observed that the man was not yet taught to speak respectfully.

Cæsar, having found a collection of letters, written by his enemies to Pompey, burnt them without reading: "For," said he, "though I am upon my guard against anger, yet it is safer to remove its cause."

Cotys, king of Thrace, having got a present of earthen vessels, exquisitely wrought, but extremely brittle, broke them into pieces, that he might not have occasion of anger against his servants.

Antigonus, king of Syria, hearing two of his soldiers reviling him behind his tent, "Gentlemen," says he, opening the curtain, "remove to a greater distance, for your king hears you."

A farmer, who had stepped into his field to mend a gap in a fence, found, at his return, the cradle, where he had left his only child asleep, turned upside down, the clothes all bloody, and his dog lying

in the same place, besmeared also with blood. Convinced, by the sight, that the creature had destroyed his child, he dashed out its brains with the hatchet in his hand; then, turning up the cradle, he found the child unhurt, and an enormous serpent lying dead on the floor, killed by that faithful dog which he put to death in blind passion.

Field Marshal Turenne being in great want of provisions, quartered his army, by force, in the town of St. Michael. Complaints were carried to the Marshal de la Ferte, under whose government that town was; who being highly disobliged by what was done to his town without his authority, insisted to have the troops instantly dislodged. Some time after, La Ferte, seeing a soldier of Turenne's guards out of his place, beat him severely. The soldier, all bloody, complained to his general, but was instantly sent back to La Ferte, with the following compliment: "That Turenne was much concerned to find his soldier had failed in his respect to him, and begged the soldier might be punished as he thought proper." The whole army was astonished; and La Ferte himself, being surprised, cried out, "What! is this man to be always wise, and I always a fool?"

A young gentleman, in the streets of Paris, being interrupted by a coach, in his passage, struck the coachman. A tradesman from his shop, cried out, "What! beat the Marshal Turenne's people!" Hearing that name, the gentleman, quite out of countenance, flew to the coach to make his excuse. The marshal said, smiling, "You understand, Sir, how to correct servants: allow me to send mine to you when they do amiss."

The marshal being one day alone in a box at the playhouse, some gentlemen came in, who, not

knowing him, would oblige him to yield his seat in the first row. They had the insolence, upon his refusal, to throw his hat and gloves on the stage. The marshal, without being moved, desired a lord of the first quality to hand them up to him. The gentlemen finding who he was, blushed, and would have retired; but he, with much good humour, entreated them to stay, saying that, if they would sit close, there was room enough for them all.

Clytus was a person whom Alexander held very dear, as being the son of his nurse, and one who had been educated together with himself. He had saved the life of Alexander, at the battle near the river Granicus, and was by him made the prefect of a province: but he could not flatter; and detesting the effeminacy of the Persians, at a feast with the king, he spake with the liberty of a Macedonian. Alexander, transported with anger, slew him with his own hands; though, when his heat was over, he was with difficulty restrained from killing himself for that fault which his sudden fury had excited him to commit.

Herod, the tetrarch of Judea, had so little command over his passion, that, upon every slight occasion, his anger would transport him into absolute madness. In such a desperate fit he killed Josippus. Sometimes he would be sorry, and repent of the folly and injuries he had done when anger had clouded his understanding, and soon after commit the same outrages; so that none about him were sure of their lives a moment.

L'Alviano, general of the Venetian armies, was taken prisoner by the troops of Louis XII. and brought before him. The king treated him with his usual humanity and politeness, to which the indignant captive did not make the proper return,

but behaved with great insolence. Louis contented himself with sending him to the quarters where the prisoners were kept, saying to his attendants, "I have done right to send Alviano away. I might have put myself in a passion with him, for which I should have been sorry. I have conquered him; I should learn to conquer myself."

When Catharine de Medicis one day overheard some of the soldiers abusing her extremely, the Cardinal of Lorraine said he would order them immediately to be hung. "By no means," exclaimed the princess: "I wish posterity to know, that a woman, a queen, and an Italian, has once in her life got the better of her anger."

The Duke of Marlborough possessed great command of temper, and never permitted it to be ruffled by little things, in which even the greatest men have been occasionally found unguarded. As he was one day riding with commissary Marriot, it began to rain, and he called to his servant for his cloak. The servant not bringing it immediately, he called for it again. The servant being embarrassed with the straps and buckles, did not come up to him. At last it raining very hard, the duke called to him again, and asked him what he was about that he did not bring his cloak.—"You must stay, Sir," grumbles the fellow, "if it rains cats and dogs, till I can get at it." The duke turned round to Marriot, and said, very coolly, "now I would not be of that fellow's temper for all the world."

Two gentlemen were riding together, one of whom, who was very choleric, happened to be mounted on a very high-mettled horse. The horse grew a little troublesome, at which the rider became very angry, and whipped and spurred him

with great fury. The horse, almost as wrong-headed as his master, returned his treatment with kicking and plunging. The companion, concerned for the danger, and ashamed of the folly of his friend, said to him, coolly, "Be quiet, and shew yourself the wiser creature of the two."

PLEASURE.

SENTIMENT.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: But know thou, that, for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment.

PLEASURES, unless wholly innocent, never continue so long as the sting they leave behind them.

Let pleasure be ever so innocent, the excess is always criminal.

The temperate man's pleasures are durable, because they are regular; and all his life is calm and serene, because it is innocent.

Pleasures, while they flatter a man, sting him to death: they are short, false, and deceitful, and revenge the merry madness of one hour with the sad repentance of many.

The only true and solid pleasure results from the reflection of having done our duty to our God, our fellow-creatures and ourselves: "having a conscience void of offence towards God and towards all men."

No pleasure can be true, or pursued with propriety and wisdom, which makes too large inroads on our time, our fortune, our health, our character, or our duty.

EXAMPLES.

The following portrait of vicious pleasure is given by an ingenious writer, after the manner of Plato. "Pleasure," says he, "is a beautiful harlot sitting in her chariot, whose four wheels are pride, gluttony, lust and idleness. The two horses are prosperity and abundance; the two drivers are indolence and security; her attendants and followers are guilt, grief, late repentance (if any), and often death and ruin. Many great men, many strong men, many rich men, many hopeful men, and many young men, have come to their end by her; but never any enjoyed full and true content by means of her."

The excellence of the allegory subjoined may stand as an apology for its length. "When Hercules," says the venerable moralist, "was in that part of his youth in which it was natural for him to consider what course of life he ought to pursue, he one day retired into a desert, where the silence and solitude of the place very much favoured his meditations. As he was musing on his present condition, and very much perplexed in his mind on the state of life he should choose, he saw two women, of a larger stature than ordinary, approaching towards him. One of them had a very noble air and graceful deportment; her beauty was natural and easy, her person clean and unspotted, her eyes cast toward the ground with an agreeable reserve, her motion and behaviour full of modesty, and her raiment white as snow. The other had a great deal of health and floridness in her countenance, which she had helped with an artificial colouring, and endeavoured to appear more than ordinarily graceful in her mien, by a mixture of affectation in all her gestures. She

had a wonderful confidence and assurance in her looks, and all the variety of colours in her dress, that she thought were the most proper to shew her complexion to an advantage. She cast her eyes upon herself, then turned them on those who were present, to see how they liked her, and often looked on the figure she made in her own shadow. Upon her nearer approach to Hercules, she stepped before the other lady, who came forward with a regular, composed carriage, and running up to him, accosted him in the following manner: "My dear Hercules, I find you are very much divided in your own thoughts upon the way of life which you ought to choose. Be my friend, and follow me. I'll lead you into the possession of pleasure, out of the reach of pain, and remove you from all the noise and disquietude of business. The affairs either of war or peace shall have no power to disturb you. Your whole employment shall be to make your life easy, and to entertain every sense with its proper gratification. Sumptuous tables, beds of roses, clouds of perfumes, concerts of music, crowds of beauties, are all in readiness to receive you. Come along with me into this region of delights, this world of pleasure, and bid farewell for ever to care, to pain, to business." Hercules, hearing the fair inviter talk after this manner, interrupted her a moment, to inquire her name. To which she answered, "My friends, and those who are well acquainted with me, call me HAPPINESS; but my enemies, and those who would injure my reputation, have given me the name of PLEASURE." By this time the other lady was come up, who addressed herself to the young hero in a very different manner. "Hercules," said she, "I offer myself to you because I know you are descended from the gods, and give proofs

of that descent by your love of virtue, and application to the studies proper for your age. This makes me hope you will gain both for yourself and me an immortal reputation. But, before I invite you into my society and friendship, I will be open and sincere with you, and must lay down this as an established truth, That there is nothing truly valuable, which can be purchased without pain or labour. The gods have set a price upon every real and noble pleasure. If you would gain the favour of the Deity, you must be at the pains of worshipping him; if the friendship of good men, you must study to oblige them; if you would be honoured by your country, you must take care to serve it. In short, if you would be eminent in war or peace, you must become master of all the qualifications that can make you so. These are the only terms and conditions upon which I can propose happiness." Here (continues the fabulist) the goddess of Pleasure broke in upon the discourse. "You see, Hercules, by her own confession, that the way to her pleasure is long and difficult; whereas that which I propose is short and easy." "Alas!" returned the other amiable figure, whose visage glowed with a passion made up of scorn and pity, "what are the pleasures you propose? To eat before you are hungry; to drink before you are athirst; to sleep before you are tired; to gratify appetites before they are raised, and to raise such appetites as nature never planted! You never heard the most delicious music, which is the praise of one's self; nor saw the most beautiful object, which is the work of one's own hands. Your votaries pass away their youth in a dream of mistaken pleasure, while they are hoarding up anguish, torment, and remorse, for old age. As for

me, I am the friend of the gods, and of good men; an agreeable companion to the artisan, a household guardian to the fathers of families, a patron and protector of servants, an associate in all true and generous friendships. The banquets of my votaries are never costly, but always delicious; for none eat or drink at them who are not invited by hunger and thirst. Their slumbers are sound, and their waking hours are cheerful. My young men have the pleasure of hearing themselves praised by those who are in years; and they who are in years, of being honoured by those who are young. In a word, my followers are favoured by the gods, beloved by their acquaintances, esteemed by their country, and, after the close of their labours, honoured by their posterity, and received up into heaven." "Here," says the mythologist, "they ended." We know by the account we have of the life of this memorable hero in ancient story, to which of these two fair advocates he gave up his heart. And I believe every one who reads this will do him the justice to approve his choice of virtue, in preference to voluptuousness and vicious indulgence.

Apicius was a great epicure, according to the low and vulgar sense of the word; but Apicius was not a Pliny, and yet Apicius had his pleasures. He had eaten, it seems, of a certain fish, at Minturna, in Campania, but he was told that the species was much larger in Africa. Upon this he immediately equipped a vessel, and set sail for that coast. The navigation was difficult and dangerous: but what will not hunger do? Apicius was a man of pleasure and appetite; every league he travelled increased the necessity of gratification. When they arrived on the coast of Africa, several fishing boats, already apprised of his voyage, came

to him, and brought him some of the fishes in question; when, how great was his surprise and chagrin, to find they were not at all bigger than those of Minturna! Instantly, therefore, without being touched with the rational curiosity of seeing a country he had never witnessed before, without any regard to the prayers of the people in his train, who wanted the refreshments of the shore, Apicius ordered his pilots to return to Italy, and thus ended his memorable adventure.

It is with great satisfaction that we can quote the following, in honour of a living and exemplary character, and not unsuitable to the subject before us. Mr. Boswell, in his account of General Paoli, observes, "That his notions of morality are high and refined; such as become the father of a nation. He told me, one day, that his father had brought him up with great strictness, and that he had very seldom deviated from the paths of virtue: that this was not from a defect of feeling and passion, but that his mind being filled with important objects, his passions were employed in more noble pursuits than those of licentious pleasure. I saw," continues the author, "from Paoli's example, the great art of preserving young men of spirit from the contagion of vice, in which there is often a species of sentiment, ingenuity, and enterprise, nearly allied to virtuous qualities. Shew a young man that there is more real spirit in virtue than in vice, and you have a surer hold of him during his years of impetuosity and passion, than by convincing his judgment of all the rectitude of ethics."

A boy, smitten with the colours of a butterfly, pursued it, from flower to flower, with indefatigable pains. First, he aimed to surprise it among the leaves of a rose: then to cover it with his hat,

as it was feeding on a daisy; now hoped to secure it as it revelled on a sprig of myrtle; and now grew sure of his prize, perceiving it to loiter on a bed of violets. But the fickle fly still eluded his attempts. At last, observing it half buried in the cup of a tulip, he rushed forward, and, snatching it with violence, crushed it to pieces. The dying insect, seeing the poor boy chagrined at his disappointment, addressed him with the calmness of a Stoic, in the following words: "Behold, now the end of thy unprofitable solicitude; and learn, for the benefit of thy future life, that all pleasure is but a painted butterfly; which may serve to amuse thee in the pursuit, but, if embraced with too much ardour, will perish in thy grasp."

PRIDE.

SENTIMENTS.

Pride was not made for man.

Pride goeth before destruction, and a high mind before a fall.

THAT extraordinary value which men are apt to put upon themselves, on account of real or imaginary excellence of mind, body or fortune, and the contempt with which they regard all those who, on comparison, seem inferior to them in those qualifications on which they have grounded the esteem they have for themselves, constitute that vice which we call Pride. There is no passion which steals into the heart more imperceptibly, which covers itself under more disguises, or which mankind in general are more subject to, than this. It is originally founded on self-love, which is the most intimate and inseparable passion of human nature; and yet man hath nothing to be proud of; every man hath his weak side; there is no such thing as perfection in the present state. The few advantages we possess want only to be properly considered, to convince us how little they are to be boasted of, or gloried in.

The whole of our bodily perfections may be summed up in two words, strength, and beauty. As for the first, that is a poor qualification to boast of, in which we are, to say the least, equalled by the plodding ox, and stupid ass. Beside, it is but

a few days sickness, or the loss of a little blood, and a Hercules becomes as manageable as a little child. Who, then, would boast of what is so very uncertain and precarious? As to beauty, that fatal ornament of the fair sex, which has exhausted the human wit in raptures in its praise, which so often proves the misfortune of its possessor, and the disquietude of him who gives himself to the admiration of it; which has ruined cities, armies, and the virtue of thousands; what is beauty? A pleasing glare of white and red reflected from a skin incomparably exceeded by the glossy hue of the humble daisy in yonder field; the mild glitter of an eye, outshone by every dew-drop on the verdant grass. Is it inherent in the human frame? No: a sudden fright alarms her; a fit of sickness attacks her; the roses fly from her cheeks; her eyes lose their fire; she looks haggard, pale, and ghastly. Even in all the blooming pride of beauty, what is the human frame? A mass of corruption, filth, and disease, covered over with a fair skin. When the animating spirit flies, and leaves the lovely tabernacle behind, how soon does horror succeed to admiration! How do we hasten to hide from our sight the loathsome remains of beauty! Open the charnel-house in which, a very little while ago, the celebrated toast was laid, who can now bear to look on that face, shrivelled, ghastly and loathsome, so lately the delight of every youthful gazer? Who could now touch her with one finger? Her, whose very steps the enamoured youth would late have kissed! Can the lover himself go near without stopping his nose at her who used to breathe, in his esteem, all the perfumes of blooming spring?

The accomplishments of the mind may likewise be said to be but two, knowledge and virtue. Is

there any reason to be proud of the poor attainments we can, in the present state, gain in knowledge, of which the perfection is to know our own weakness; or, as Socrates said, to know that we know nothing? Is that an accomplishment to be boasted of, which a blow on the head, or a week's illness may utterly destroy? As to our attainments in virtue or religion, to be proud on these accounts would be to be proud of what we do not possess: for pride would annihilate all our virtues, and render our religion vain. For we all know that humility is one of the first dictates of true religion.

All the wits of almost every age and country have exposed, with all the strength of wit and good sense, the vanity of a man's valuing himself upon his ancestors; and have endeavoured to shew that true grandeur consists not in birth or titles, but in virtue alone. That man who is insolent or arrogant, on account of his possessions, richly deserves that hatred and contempt he unavoidably meets. This fool knows not the proper use of what he possesses; no wonder, then, that he utterly mistakes its real value.

EXAMPLES.

Sethos, king of Egypt, growing mighty, grew, at the same time, so proud, that he made his tributary kings draw his chariot, in the place of horses: but observing one of the kings to look very earnestly on the wheel, and demanding why he did so, the degraded monarch replied, "I am comforting myself under my misfortune, by observing that the lowermost spokes of the wheel become uppermost in turn." Sethos took the hint, and discontinued the custom.

Pharaoh Ophra, called also Apries, used to boast

that he cared neither for God nor man, that would wish to deprive him of his kingdom. Not long, however, had he reigned, ere he was strangled by Amasis, one of his own officers.

Alexander the Great was so elated with pride by the sway of his arms, that he caused it to be given out that he was the son of Jupiter Ammon, and claimed to be worshipped with divine honours. His friend Calisthenes, the philosopher, venturing to remonstrate with him on his impiety, lost his favour, and was afterwards slain by his command.

Mencrates, the physician, having cured some dangerous and desperate diseases, assumed to himself the name of Jupiter, the chief of the gods.

So Empedocles, the philosopher, having cured a person of a dangerous distemper, and observing that the people almost deified him, thought fit to throw himself into the burning mountain of Ætna, to prove himself immortal, and be translated into the number of the gods.

Cyrus, the first king of the Persians, suffered himself to be worshipped with divine honours: as did also Antiochus, king of Syria.

Caligula, the Roman emperor, commanded that he should be worshipped as a god, and caused a temple to be erected for him. He built also his house in the capitol, so that he might dwell with Jupiter; but being angry that Jupiter was still preferred before him, he afterwards erected a temple in his palace, and would have the statue of Jupiter Olympus in his form brought thither; the ship, however, which was sent for it, was broken in pieces by a thunderbolt. He used to sit in the middle of the images of the gods, and caused the most rare and costly fowls and birds to be sacrificed to him. He had also certain instruments made, whereby he imitated thunder and lightning,

and, when it really thundered, he used to cast stones towards heaven, saying, "Either thou shalt kill me or I will kill thee; with other blasphemies, which we do not think proper to repeat in this work.

Domitian, Heliogabalus, Commodus, and Diocletian claimed to be gods, and fell little short of the excesses of Caligula.

Curius Dentatus, the Roman consul, overthrew the Samnites in a great battle, and, pursuing them to the sea, took many prisoners; and, in the pride of his heart, on returning to Rome, publicly boasted that he had taken so much land as would have turned to a waste wilderness, if he had not taken so many men to plant it; and that he had taken so many men, that they would have perished with famine, if he had not taken so much land to maintain them.

Pompey the Great, when he heard that Julius Cæsar was coming with his army towards Rome, boasted in the senate that, if he did but stamp with his foot, he could fill Italy with armies; yet, when afterwards he heard that Cæsar had passed the river Rubicon, he fled from Italy into Epirus.

Poppœa Sabina, wife of Nero, was excessively proud, Her mules had bridles and furniture of gold, were shod with silver, and sometimes with gold. She kept five hundred female asses always about her court, in whose milk she often bathed her body, for so careful was she of her skin, that she wished to die before that should suffer wrinkles or decay.

Xerxes having made a bridge of boats over the Hellespont, for the passage of his immense army from Asia into Europe, a tempest arose and destroyed it; upon which he caused his men to give the sea three hundred stripes, and to throw chains

in it to bind it to its good behaviour; which office was performed, accompanied with these arrogant expressions; "Unruly water, thy lord has ordered thee this punishment; and, whether thou wilt or no, he is resolved to pass over thee."

The Khan of Tartary was used, when he had dined, to cause trumpets to be sounded at his palace gates, to give notice to all the kings in the world that, as the great Khan had dined, they had then permission to go to dinner.

A poor Spanish cobbler, on his death-bed, being solicited by his son for his blessing, strictly enjoined him always to retain the majesty of his family.

A poor woman in Spain, attended by three of her children, went begging from door to door. Some French merchants, out of compassion, offered to take the eldest of her sons into their service; but, with true Spanish pride, she rejected the proposal; scorning, as she said, that any of her family should be disgraced by servitude; as, for aught they knew, simple as he stood there, he might live to be one day king of Spain.

John O'Neal, father to the Earl of Tyr Owen, inscribed himself in all places, "The great John O'Neal, friend to Queen Elizabeth, and foe to all the world besides."

When no one else would exalt Hildebrand to the pope's chair, he placed himself in it, saying, "Who can better judge of my worth than myself?"

Xerxes, in his expedition against Greece, calling his princes together, thus addressed them: "That I may not appear to follow my own counsel, I have assembled you: but recollect, that it better becomes you to obey than to advise."

Attila, king of the Huns, proudly gave out that the stars fell before him, that the earth trembled

at his presence, and that he would be the scourge of nations; yet, after all his pride, a flux of blood broke out at his mouth, and choked him on his wedding-night.

Cleopes, king of Egypt, began to build an immense pyramid; but wanting money to finish it, and having a beautiful daughter, he prostituted her among his workmen to get money to accomplish his great work, which he left a perpetual monument of his pride, folly, and wickedness.

Cræsus, king of Lydia, having expressed an extraordinary inclination to see Solon, that philosopher repaired to Sardis to pay him a visit.—The first time he was presented, the king received him, seated on his throne, and dressed on purpose in his most sumptuous robes; but Solon appeared not the least astonished at the sight of such a glare of magnificence.

“My friend,” said Cræsus to him, “Fame has every where reported thy wisdom. I know you have seen many countries; but have you ever seen a person dressed so magnificently as I am?” “Yes,” replied Solon; the “pheasants and peacocks are dressed more magnificently, because their brilliant apparel is the gift of nature, without their taking any thought or pains to adorn themselves.”

Such an unexpected answer very much surprised Cræsus, who ordered his officers to open all his treasures, and to shew them to Solon; as also his rich furniture, and whatever was magnificent in his palace. He then sent for him a second time, and asked him if he had ever seen a man more happy than he was; “Yes,” replied Solon, “and that man was Tellus, a citizen of Athens, who lived with an unblemished character, in a well regulated republic. He left two children much respected,

with a moderate fortune for their subsistence ; and, at last, had the happiness to die sword in hand, after having obtained a victory for his country. The Athenians have erected a monument to his memory, on the spot where he fell, and have otherwise paid him great honours."

Croesus was no less astonished at this than at the first answer ; and began to think Solon was not perfectly right in his senses. " Well," continued Croesus, " who is the next happy man to Tellus ?" " There were, formerly," replied Solon, " two brothers, the one named Cleobis, and the other Byton, They were so robust, that they always obtained the prize in every sort of combat, and perfectly loved each other. One feast day, when the priestess of Juno, their mother, for whom they had the most tender affection, was to go to the temple to sacrifice, the oxen, that were to draw her thither, did not come in time, Cleobis and Byton hereupon fastened themselves to her carriage, and in that manner drew her to the temple. All the matrons, in raptures, congratulated their mother on having brought two such sons into the world. Their mother, penetrated with emotions of the strongest joy and gratitude, fervently prayed the goddess to bestow on her sons the best gift she had to confer on mortals. Her prayers were heard ; for, after the sacrifice, the two sons fell asleep in the temple, and never afterwards awoke. Thus they finished their lives in a tranquil and peaceful death.

Croesus could no longer conceal his rage.— " What then," said he, " do you not even place me among the number of happy people ?"— " O, king of the Lydians !" replied Solon, " you possess great riches, and are a master of a great multitude of people ; but life is liable to so many changes, that we cannot presume to decide on the felicity

of any man, until he has finished his mortal career.

Alcibiades, one day boasting of his riches, and the great extent of his possessions, Socrates led him to a geographical chart, and asked him in what part Attica was placed. It took up but a small spot in the map, and a little more than a point. Socrates then desired him to shew him all his possessions on that map; but he replied, "They are too small to be placed in a general map."—"See then," replied Socrates, "what you make such a boast of, and what you pride yourself in so much, is but an imperceptible point of earth."



John reproving the bandit Chief.

RELIGION.

SENTIMENTS.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.

RELIGION is such a sense of God on the soul, and our obligation to and dependance upon him, as

to make it our principal study to do that which we think will be pleasing in his sight, and to avoid every thing which we think will offend him. As he is the fountain of goodness and justice, of course religion must be the foundation of all Christian and moral virtue: to do good to all, and to avoid giving offence to, or injuring willingly, even those who are our enemies and persecutors.

We may confidently affirm that it is natural to mankind even in the most unenlightened state; for nations that never were favoured with the knowledge of religion by revelation, have, nevertheless, an idea that there is a Being who rewards good men, and punishes the wicked.

Religion, like the treasure hid in the field, which a man sold all he had to purchase, is of that price, that it cannot be had at too great a purchase; since, without it, the best condition of life cannot make us happy; and with it, it is impossible we should be miserable, even in the worst. It supports a Christian under all the afflictions of life; the desertion of friends, the wreck of fortune, and the loss of reputation; the deprivation of children who are strongly linked to his heart; but, above all, perhaps the wife of his bosom, his second self; yet he humbly submits to the soul-rending strokes, and with Job says, "*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*" It is the author of a most glorious hope—of a final victory over death and sin! "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

The great Lord Burleigh used to say, "I will never trust any man not of sound religion; for he that is false to God, can never be true to man."

EXAMPLES.

When Protagoras, the sceptic, whose strange caprices led him to doubt of every thing, even though he saw or felt it, began his book by saying, "As for the gods, whether they are or are not, I have nothing to say;" the magistrates of Athens highly resenting this profane trifling with things sacred, banished him out of their city, and condemned his book to be burnt by the common executioner.

What a blessing to mankind was the ingenious, humble, and pious Mr. Boyle! What a common pest was the fallacious, proud, and impious Hobbes! Accordingly we find that the former bade adieu to the world with the utmost serenity, honour, and hope; while the latter went out of it in the dark, and with terrible apprehensions of an unknown future. He had been an instrument of the prince of darkness, in poisoning many young gentlemen, and others, with his wicked principles, as the Earl of Rochester confessed with extreme compunction and grief upon his death-bed. It is remarked by those who critically observed the author of the "Leviathan," that though in a humour of bravado he would speak very strange and unbecoming things of God, yet in his study, in the dark, and in his retired thoughts, he trembled before him. Many appear like atheists in their mirth, amidst wine and company, who are quite of other sentiments in sickness, and gloom, and solitude. What could make this strange man awake in such terror and amazement if his candle happened to go out in the night? What, but that he was unable to bear the dismal reflections of his dark and desolate mind; and knew not how to

extinguish nor how to bear the light of "the candle of the Lord," within him.

Xenophon informs us, that Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, made the worship of the gods, and a respect for religion, the first objects of his care. Actuated by this principle, he established a number of magi, or priests, to sing daily a morning service to the honour of the gods, and to offer sacrifices; which was daily practised among the Persians of succeeding ages. The prince's disposition quickly became, as is usual, the prevailing disposition among the people, and his example became the rule of their conduct. Cyrus, on the other hand, was extremely glad to find in them such sentiments of religion; being convinced, that whoever sincerely fears and worships God, will at the same time be faithful to his king, and preserve an inviolable attachment to his person, and to the welfare of the state.

Agesilaus, king of Sparta, was on all occasions distinguished by his particular veneration for the gods. The noblest circumstance of his victory over the Athenians and Boetians, at Chæronea, was for sacrificing his resentment to the honour of religion: for a considerable number of the flying enemy having thrown themselves into the Temple of Minerva, and application being made to him to know in what manner they should be treated, he gave strict orders that none of them should be touched; though he then laboured under the anguish of several wounds he had received in the action, and was visibly exasperated at the opposition he had met with. But his veneration was not confined to the Temples of the Greeks. When he made war upon the Barbarians, he was equally careful not to profane the images of their deities, nor offer the least violation to their altars. In the

same manner, Alexander the Great, when he demolished Thebes, paid a particular attention to the honour of the gods, suffering none of their temples, or any other religious buildings, to be plundered; and afterwards, in his Asiatic expedition, which was purposely undertaken to humble the pride, and retaliate the ravages of the Persians, he was remarkably cautious not to injure, or shew the smallest contempt of their places of worship; though the Persians had been notoriously guilty this way when they invaded Greece.

Of all the singular virtues which united in the character of Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, that which crowned the whole, was his exemplary piety to God. The following is related of him when he was once in his camp before Werben. He had been alone in the cabinet of his pavilion some hours together, and none of his attendants at these seasons durst interrupt him. At length, however, a favourite of his, having some important matter to tell him, came softly to the door, and looking in, beheld the king very devoutly on his knees at prayer. Fearing to molest him in that sacred exercise, he was about to withdraw his head, when the king espied him, and bidding him come in, said, "Thou wonderest to see me in this posture, since I have so many thousands of subjects to pray for me: but I tell thee, that no man has more need to pray for himself, than he who, being to render an account of his actions to none but God, is, for that reason, more closely assailed by the devil than all other men beside." When the town of Landshut, in Bavaria, surrendered to him at discretion, the principal inhabitants of it fell down upon their knees before him, and presented him with the keys of their town. "Rise, rise," said he: "it is your duty to fall on

your knees to God, and not to so frail and feeble a mortal as I am."

The ministers of Louis XIII. king of France, were desirous to insert, in a treaty between their sovereign and Gustavus, that the King of France had the King of Sweden under his protection. Gustavus spiritedly replied, "I have no occasion for any protection but that of God, and I desire no other. After God, I acknowledge no superior; and I wish to owe the success of my arms to my sword and my good conduct alone." The same Gustavus used to say that a man made a better soldier, in proportion to his being a better Christian.

Eusebius, in his history, informs us, that St. John, during his ministration to the Western churches, cast his eye upon a young man, remarkable for the extent of his knowledge, and the ingenuousness of his mind. The aged apostle thought that he had discovered in him a useful instrument for the propagating of Christianity: accordingly, he took particular pains to convert him, and to instruct him in the divine doctrines of his great Maker; and, that he might be still be better acquainted with the system of Christianity, at his departure, he recommended him to the care of a pious old father, who had some authority in the infant church. The youth continued awhile in the duties of his new profession, and attended with care to the lectures of his venerable tutor. But his former associates, when they found themselves deserted by him, were grieved at the success of the apostle, and exerted their utmost efforts to regain so useful and entertaining a companion. They succeeded in their attempts: the father was forsaken, and his pupil plunged deep into irregularity and vice. The apostle, after some

time, returned to those parts; and "Where," said he, with impatience, to his aged friend, "where is my favourite youth?"—Alas!" replied the good old man, with tears in his eyes, "he is fallen, irrecoverably fallen! he has forsaken the society of saints, and is now a leader of a gang of robbers in the neighbouring mountains." Upon hearing this unexpected and unpleasing account, the apostle forgot his sufferings, and his years, and hastened to the place of rendezvous; where, being seized by one of the band, he desired to speak with their captain. The captain being told that a strange pilgrim asked to be admitted to him, ordered him to be brought before him; but, when he beheld the venerable apostle, his hopes of amusement sunk, and were changed into shame and confusion: and the hardy leader of a band of robbers trembled before a poor and helpless old man. He quitted, once more, the society of wickedness, and lived and died in the service of his Redeemer.

While the colleagues of Constantius, the Roman emperor, were persecuting the Christians with fire and sword, he politically pretended to persecute them too; and declared to such officers of his household, and governors of provinces, as were Christians, that he left it to their choice, either to sacrifice to the gods, and by that means preserve themselves in their employments, or to forfeit their places and his favour, by continuing steady in their religion. When they had all declared their option, the emperor discovered his real sentiments; reproached, in the most bitter terms, those who had renounced their religion; highly extolled the virtue and constancy of such as had despised the wealth and vanities of the world; and dismissed the former with ignominy,

saying, that those who had betrayed their God would not scruple to betray their prince: while he retained the latter, trusted them with the guard of his person, and the whole management of public affairs, as persons on whose fidelity he could firmly rely, and in whom he might put an entire confidence.

Theodoric the First, king of the Goths, in his faith was an Arian; yet he never persecuted those who differed from him in his religious opinions. He was extremely displeased with those persons whom he suspected of coming over to his belief to gain his favour, and without really believing what they professed to believe. One of his officers having thus temporized with his faith, he immediately ordered him to be beheaded; saying, "If, Sir, you have not preserved your faith towards God, how can I expect that you will keep it with me, who am but a man?"

It was the daily practice of that eminent physician, Dr. Boerhaave, throughout his whole life, as soon as soon as he rose in the morning, which was generally very early, to retire for an hour to private prayer and meditation on some part of the scriptures. He often told his friends, when they asked him how it was possible for him to go through so much fatigue, that it was this which gave him spirit and vigour in the business of the day. This therefore, he recommended, as the best rule he could give: "for nothing," he said, "could tend more to the health of the body, than the tranquillity of the mind; and that he knew nothing which could support himself or his fellow-creatures, amidst the various distresses of life, but a well-grounded confidence in the Supreme Being, upon the principles of Christianity."

The emperor, Charles V. declared that he found

more satisfaction, more content, in his monastic solitude, and exercises of devotion, than all the victories and all the triumphs of his past life had ever afforded him, though they made him esteemed as the most fortunate of princes.

Mr. Locke, in a letter written the year before his death, to one who asked him, "What is the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the Christian religion?" gives this memorable reply.—"Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." The death of this great man was agreeable to his life. About two months before this event happened, he drew up a letter to a certain gentleman, and left this direction upon it; "To be delivered to him after my decease!" in which are these remarkable words; "I know you loved me living, and will preserve my memory now I am dead. This life is a scene of vanity that soon passes away, and affords no solid satisfaction, but in the consciousness of doing well, and in the hopes of another life. This is what I can say upon experience, and what you will find to be true, when you come to make up the account."

Mr. Addison, as we learn from the late celebrated Dr. Young's Tract on Original Composition, after a long and manly, but fruitless, struggle with the distemper of which he died, dismissed his physicians, and, with them, all hopes of life. He dismissed not, however, his concern for the living; but sent for the young Lord Warwick, a youth nearly related to him, and finely accomplished, yet not above being better for good impressions from a dying friend. He came; but,

life now glimmering in the socket, the dying friend was silent. After a decent and proper pause, the youth said, "Dear Sir, you sent for me; I believe and hope that you have some commands; be assured I shall hold them most sacred." May distant ages not only hear, but feel the reply! Forcibly grasping the young nobleman's hand, he softly said, "See in what peace a Christian can die!" He spoke with difficulty, and soon expired. —Through divine grace how great is man! through divine mercy how stingless is death! Who would not thus expire?

M. Du Fresne took occasion one day to remark to Louis XIV. that he did not appear to be sufficiently cautious in the liberty which he gave to every one to approach his person, and more particularly when he was at war with a people (the Dutch) who were irritated against him, and were capable of attempting any thing. "I have received, Sir," said Louis, "a great many hints like this: in short, if I were capable of taking them, my life would not be worth having: it is in the hands of God; he will dispose of it as he pleases; and therefore I do not presume to make the least alteration in my conduct."

Louis, the late Duke of Orleans, thus expressed the delight he found in piety and devotion: "I know, by experience, that sublunary grandeur and sublunary pleasure are deceitful and vain, and are always infinitely below the conceptions we form of them. But, on the contrary, such happiness and such complacency may be found in devotion and piety, as the sensual mind has no idea of."

Cardinal Wolsey, one of the greatest ministers of state that ever was, poured forth his soul in these words after his fall from the favour of Henry

VIII. "Had I been as diligent to serve my God as I have been to please my king, he would not have forsaken me now in my grey hairs."

Voltaire, a man who, after having long and too justly been considered as the patron of infidelity, and after having shewn himself equally the enemy of every religious establishment, at length, to the astonishment of all serious minds, and at the close of a long life of nearly eighty years, in the most solemn manner, gave the confession of his faith here subjoined; and which is confirmed on the oath of several witnesses who were present. "I believe, firmly," says he, "all that the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church believes and confesses. I believe in one God, in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, really distinguished; having the same nature, the same divinity, and the same power. That the second person was made man, called Jesus Christ, who died for the salvation of all men; who has established the Holy Scriptures. I condemn, likewise, all the heresies the said church has condemned and rejected; likewise all perverted misinterpretations which may be put on them. This true and Catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, I profess and acknowledge to be the only true one; and I swear, promise and engage myself, to die in this belief, by the grace of God. I believe and acknowledge, also, with a perfect faith, all and every one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed, (which he recited in Latin, very distinctly.) I declare, moreover, that I have made this confession before the reverend Father Capuchin, previous to his confessing me." If a veteran in the cause of infidelity thus closes his life and his works, does it not greatly behove those who have been deluded and misled by his writings, seriously to look to them-

selves, and bring home this striking example to their hearts, lest they fall into the condemnation which their master seeks thus meanly at the end to avoid?

Lord Peterborough, more famed for wit than religion, when he lodged with Fenelon, at Cambray, was so charmed with the piety and virtue of the archbishop, that he exclaimed, at parting, "If I stay here any longer, I shall become a Christian in spite of myself."

Sir William Waller left behind him, in a "Daily Directory" for his conduct, these reflections; "Every day is a little life, in the account whereof we may reckon our birth from the womb of the morning: our growing time from thence to noon, when we are as the sun in his strength; after which, like a shadow that declineth, we hasten to the evening of our age, till at last we close our eyes in sleep, the image of death; and our whole life is but this tale of a day, told over and over. I should therefore so spend every day, as if it were all the life I had to live; and in pursuance of this end, and of the vow I have made to walk with God in a closer communication than I have formerly done, I would endeavour, by his grace, to observe in the course of my remaining span, or rather inch of life, this daily directory: To awake with God as early as I can, and to consecrate the first fruits of my thoughts unto him by prayer and meditation, and by renewed acts of repentance; that so God may awake for me, and make the habitation of my righteousness prosperous. To this end, I would make it my care to lie down the night before in the peace of God, who hath promised that his commandment shall keep me when awake." Edmund Waller, the poet, who attended him in his last illness, was once at court, when the Duke of

Buckingham spoke profanely before King Charles the Second, and told him, "My Lord, I am a great deal older than your grace, and have, I believe, heard more arguments for atheism than ever your grace did. But I have lived long enough to see that there is nothing in them, and I hope your grace will."

RIDICULE.

SENTIMENTS.

————— *The world's dread laugh,
Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn.*

NOTHING is ridiculous but what is deformed ; nor in any thing proof against raillery but what is proper and handsome.

Men make themselves ridiculous not by qualities they have, but by the affectation of those they have not.

Ridicule is a weapon used by weak men and little minds, when they have the wrong side of a question, and are at a loss for arguments. The wicked or profligate use it to shield themselves against the conviction of truth ; to perplex when they cannot convince ; to wound the reputation of those they cannot emulate ; and to frighten the timorous from following the duties of conscience and rectitude.

It is commonly the strongest instrument of ignorance and error, and may be applied to either side of the question, according to the dexterous management of him that useth it.

Nothing blunts the edge of ridicule so much as good humour, or sharpens it so much as the contrary.

Ridicule is the chief weapon of infidelity ; the

lowest and most abandoned of mankind can ridicule the most exalted beings ; they call prudence, avarice ; courage, rashness ; and brand good-nature and generosity with the name of prodigality ; they laugh at the compassionate for his weakness ; the serious man for his preciseness ; and the pious man for his hypocrisy ; and modesty is called prudery ; for the man of wit is never so happy as when he can raise the blush of ingenuous merit, or stamp the marks of deformity and guilt on the features of innocence and beauty. In short, it is only calculated to put virtue out of countenance, to enhance the miseries of the wretched, and poison the feast of happiness ; to insult man, affront God ; to make us hateful to our fellow creatures, uneasy to ourselves, and highly displeasing to the Almighty.

EXAMPLES.

A young gentleman of moderate understanding, but of great vivacity, by dipping into many authors of the modish and free-thinking turn, had acquired a little smattering of knowledge, just enough to make an atheist or free-thinker, but not a philosopher or a man of sense. With these accomplishments, he went into the country to his father, who was a plain, rough, honest man, and wise, though not learned. The son, who took all opportunities to shew his learning, began to establish a new religion in the family, and to enlarge the narrowness of their country notions ; in which he succeeded so well, that he seduced the butler by his table talk, and staggered his eldest sister. The old gentleman began to be alarmed at the schisms that arose among his children, but yet did not believe his son's doctrine to be so per-

icious as it really was, till one day, talking of his setting-dog, the son said he did not question but Carlo was as immortal as any one of the family; and, in the heat of argument, told his father, that, for his part, he expected to die like a dog. Upon which the old man, starting up in a passion, cried out, Then "Sirrah, you shall live like one!" and taking his cane in his hand, cudgelled him out of his system, and brought him to more serious reflections and better studies. "I do not," continues Sir Richard Steel, from whom this is taken, "mention the cudgelling part of the story, with a design to engage the secular arm in matters of this nature; but, certainly, if ever it exerts itself in affairs of opinion and speculation, it ought to do it on such shallow and despicable pretenders to knowledge, who endeavour to give a man dark and uncomfortable prospects of his being, and to destroy those principles which are the support, happiness and glory, of all public societies, as well as of private persons." "If the talents of ridicule," says Mr. Addison, "were employed to laugh men out of vice and folly, it might be of some use in the world; but, instead of this, we find that it is generally made use of to laugh men out of virtue and good sense, by attacking every thing that is serious and solemn, decent and praise-worthy, in human life." We have a remarkable example in the case of the Lord Chancellor Clarendon; concerning whom, (among the other measures taken to prejudice and ruin him with King Charles the Second,) we are told that mockery and ridicule were two of the most notable weapons employed by his adversaries—and almost all his adversaries were the vicious and the profane. The Duke of Buckingham, in particular, and Eleanor Gwyn, the king's mistress, were the chief amongst these; the

latter being often allowed to entertain the king, and some of his courtiers, with mocking at the age and infirmities of the good lord chancellor, and attempting to imitate his lameness of gait, and gravity of aspect; while the former, upon every occasion, pleased himself and the company in acting all the persons who spoke even at the council-board, in their looks and motions—a piece of mimicry in which he had an especial faculty, and in his exercise of which the chancellor had a full part. Thus, in the height of mirth, if the king said he would go such a journey, or do the most trivial thing, to-morrow, a wager would be laid with him that he would not do it; and when the king asked why, it was answered, that the chancellor would not let him! and another would protest that he thought there was no ground for that imputation; however, he could not deny that it was generally believed abroad that his majesty was entirely and implicitly governed by the chancellor: and when, by these means, they had often put the king in a passion, it was instantly reported with great joy in other companies. By such petty, low, and most illiberal arts, was a great and good man insulted, and at last degraded from all his comforts, his honours, and his good name. Nor was this all: the merry monarch himself suffered most essentially by the like shafts of ridicule and buffoonery: had it not been for which, there seems no room to doubt that, in many instances, he had proved a much better king, and a more happy man. This is particularly noted by the noble lord above-mentioned, who one day told the king that it was observed abroad to be a faculty very much of late improved in his court, to laugh at those arguments he could not answer. “And though,” said he,” the king did not then, nor a good while after,

appear to dislike the liberty I presumed to take with him, yet I found every day that some arguments grew less acceptable to him, and that the constant conversation he held with men of great profaneness, whose wit consisted in abusing scripture, and in repeating and acting what preachers said in their sermons, and turning it into ridicule, (a science in which the Duke of Buckingham excelled,) did much lessen the natural esteem and reverence for the clergy; and inclined him to consider them as a rank of men who compounded a religion for their own advantage, and to serve their own turns; nor was all I could say to him of weight enough to make any impression to the contrary."

The Earl of Chesterfield, being at Brussels, was waited on by the celebrated M. Voltaire, who politely invited him to sup with him and Madame C———. His lordship accepted the invitation. The conversation happening to turn upon the affairs of England, "I think, my lord," said Madame C———, "that the parliament of England consists of five or six hundred of the best informed and most sensible men in the kingdom."—"True, madam; they are generally supposed to be so."—"What, then, my lord, can be the reason that they tolerate so great an absurdity as the Christian religion?"—"I suppose, madam," replied his lordship, "it is because they have not been able to substitute any thing better in its stead: when they can, I don't doubt but in their wisdom they will readily accept it." Surely so well-turned a piece of raillery was more forcible than a thousand arguments; and in cases like these it is, that the true sense of ridicule is seen.

After the assassination of his old master, Henry the Fourth, of France, Sully withdrew himself

from public affairs, and lived in retirement thirty years, seldom or never coming to court. Louis the Thirteenth, however, wishing to have his opinion upon some matters of consequence, sent for him to come to him at Paris, and the good old man obeyed his summons, but not with the greatest alacrity. The gay courtiers, on seeing a man dressed unlike to themselves, and of grave and serious manners, totally different from their own, and which appeared to be those of the last century, turned Sully into ridicule, and took him off to his face. Sully, perceiving this, said coolly to the king, "Sire, when your father, of glorious memory, did me the honour to consult me on any matter of importance, he first sent away all the jesters and all the buffoons of his court."

The Duchess of Burgundy, when she was very young, seeing an officer at supper who was extremely ugly, was very loud in her ridicule of his person. "Madam," said the king, (Louis the Fourteenth,) to her, "I think him one of the handsomest men in the kingdom; for he is one of the bravest."

A gentleman of a grave deportment was busily engaged in blowing bubbles of soap and water, and was attentively observing them, as they expanded and burst in the sunshine. A pert youth fell into a fit of loud laughter, at a sight so strange, and which shewed, as he thought, such folly and insanity. "Be ashamed, young man," said one who passed by, "of your rudeness and ignorance. You now behold the greatest philosopher of the age, Sir Isaac Newton, investigating the nature of lights and colours, by a series of experiments no less curious than useful, though you deem them childish and insignificant."

REVENGE.

SENTIMENTS.

To err, is human; to forgive, divine.

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

By taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is his superior.

To be able to bear provocation, is an argument of great wisdom: and to forgive it, of a great mind.

Revenge stops at nothing that is violent and wicked. The histories of all ages are full of the tragical outrages that have been executed by this diabolical passion.

A more glorious victory cannot be gained over another man than this, that when the injury began on his part, the kindness should begin on ours.

He that waits for an opportunity of acting his revenge, watches to do himself a mischief.

It was a strange revenge of a countryman, who was the last life in the lease of an estate in his patron's possession, who, taking something ill of his landlord, immediately poisoned himself to defeat the other of the estate.

Revenge begins in anger, and ends with repentance.

Solomon says, "The discretion of a man de-

ferreth his anger, and it is his glory to pass over a transgression."

EXAMPLES.

When the emperor Frederick had obtained a most signal victory in Hungary, he spoke thus to his soldiers; "We have done," said he, "a great work; and yet there is a greater that still remains for us to do; which is, to overcome ourselves, and to put an end at once to our covetousness, and the desire of revenge."

In the isle of Majorca, there was a lord of a castle, who, amongst others, kept a negro slave; and, for some fault of his, had beaten him with great severity. The villain Moor, watching his opportunity, when his master and the rest were absent, shut the door against him, and, at his return, thus acted his revenge: while his lord stood without, demanding entrance, he reviled him, violated his lady, threw her and two of his children out at the castle windows, and stood ready to do the like with the third and youngest child. The miserable father, who had beheld the ruin of all his family but this one, begged of his slave to save the life of that little one; which the cruel slave refused, unless he would cut off his own nose. The fond parent accepted the condition, and had no sooner performed it, than the bloody villain first cast the infant down headlong, and then himself, in a barbarous bravery, thereby to elude the vengeance of his abused lord.

A certain Italian, having his enemy in his power, told him there was no possible way for him to save his life, unless he would immediately deny and renounce his Saviour. The timorous wretch in the hope of mercy, did it; when the other forthwith

stabbed him to the heart, saying that now he had a full and noble revenge, for he had killed at once both his body and soul.

A noble Hungarian, having found one in bed with his wife, committed the adulterer to prison, there to be famished to death; and that he might the better attain his end, he caused a roasted fowl every now and then to be let down to his nose, that by the smell of the meat, his appetite might be excited to the greater eagerness; but he was not suffered to taste of it; it was only presented to make his punishment the more bitter. When the miserable creature had endured this usage for six days, on the seventh it was found that he had eaten the upper part of his own arms.

M. Tullius Cicero had made some orations against M. Antonius; for which, when Antonius came to be of the triumvirate, he caused him to be slain. Fulvia, the wife of Antonius, not satisfied with the death of that great orator, caused his head to be brought to her, upon which she bestowed many curses: she spit in the face of it; she placed it upon her lap, and opening the mouth drew out the tongue, and pricked it in divers places with a needle; and after all, caused it to be set up in a high and eminent place, over those pulpits from whence the orators used to speak their orations to the people.

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, was stabbed at Portsmouth, Saturday, August 23, 1628, by John Felton. It is said the villain did it partly in revenge, for that the duke had denied him some office he had made suit for; nor is it improbable, for I find him thus characterised:—“He was a person of little stature, of a stout and revengeful spirit. Having once received an injury from a gentleman, he cut off a piece of his little

finger, and sent it with a challenge to the gentleman to fight him; thereby to let him know that he valued not the exposing his whole body to hazard, so he might but have an opportunity to be revenged."

Anno 1500, at a time when Tamas Shah ruled Persia, the city of Ispahan, (the metropolis of all Persia,) surfeiting with luxury, refused not only to contribute reasonably to the king's occasions, at that time molested with the Turks and Tartars, but audaciously withstood his desired entrance. A rebellion so insufferable made him swear a revenge scarce to be paralleled. With fury he assaults, in a rage enters it, firing a great part, and in a hostile severity pillaging each house: and, to conclude, regarding neither the outcries of old men, weak women, nor innocent children, in two days he made headless three hundred thousand of those Ispahanians; and from Tamerlane's rigid example at Damascus, erected a trophy, (a pillar of their heads,) as a memorial of their disloyalty and his bitter revenge.

Memorable is the example of Johannes Gualbertes, a knight of Florence; who returning out of the field into the city, attended with a numerous retinue, met with that very person who, not long before, had killed his only brother; nor could the other escape him. Johannes presently drew his sword, that with one blow he might revenge the death of his brother: when the other, falling prostrate on the ground at his feet, humbly besought him, for the sake of the crucified Christ, to spare his life. Johannes, suppressing his anger, let him depart, and offered his sword, drawn as it was, before the image of Christ crucified, in the next church he came to.

We cannot, perhaps, better instance the no-

blest way of taking revenge, than that heretofore pointed out by a common soldier. When the great Condé commanded the Spanish army in Flanders, and laid siege to one of its towns, the soldier in question being ill treated by a general officer, and struck several times with a cane, for some words he had let fall, answered, very coolly, that he should soon make him repent it. Fifteen days after, the same general officer ordered the colonel of the trenches to find him out a bold and intrepid fellow in his regiment, to do a notable piece of service; and for which he promised a reward of a hundred pistoles. The soldier we are speaking of, who passed for the bravest in the regiment, offered himself for the business; and taking with him thirty of his comrades, whom he selected, discharged his commission, which was a very hazardous one, with incredible courage and success. On his return, the officer highly commended him, and gave him the hundred pistoles he had promised. These, however, the soldier presently distributed among his comrades, saying, he did not serve for pay, and demanded only, that, if his late action seemed to deserve any recompense, they would make him an officer: "And now, Sir," continued he, to the general, who did not know him, "I am the soldier whom you so abused fifteen days ago; and I told you I would make you repent it." The general instantly recollected him, and, in great admiration of his virtue, threw his arms round his neck, begged his pardon, and gave him a commission that very day.

There was an uncivil fellow, who did nothing all the day long but rail against Pericles, the famous Athenian, in the market-place, and before all the people: and though he was at that time

the public magistrate, yet he took no notice of it, but all the while dispatched sundry matters of importance, till night came; and then, with a sober pace, went home towards his house, this varlet following all the way with abuse. Pericles, when he came to his house, it being dark, called to his servants to light the fellow home.

Hamilcar, general of the Carthaginians, after gaining several battles, was enviously accused, as if he went about to establish the sole sovereignty in himself, and was put to death. His brother Giscon was forced into exile, and all his goods confiscated. After which the Carthaginians made use of several generals; but finding themselves to be shamefully beaten, and reduced to an extreme hazard of servitude, they recalled Giscon from his banishment, and having intrusted him with the supreme command in all military affairs, they put into his hands all his and his brother's enemies, to be disposed of and punished at his pleasure. Giscon caused them all to be bound, and, in the sight of the people, commanded them all to lie prostrate on the ground; which done, with a quick foot he passed over them all three times, treading upon each of their necks. "I have now," said he, "a sufficient and noble revenge for the murder of my brother." Upon which he freely dismissed them all; saying, "I have not rendered evil for evil, but good for evil."

Aliverda, generalissimo of the armies of Abbas the Great, King of Persia, and his prime minister, was as good a general, and as able a politician as he was amiable in the capacity of a courtier. From the constant serenity of his countenance, it was judged that nothing could ruffle the calmness of his heart; and virtue displayed itself in him so gracefully and so naturally, that it was supposed

to be the effect of his happy temper. An extraordinary incident made the world to do him justice, and place him in the rank he deserved. One day, as he was shut up in his closet, bestowing on affairs of state the hours which other men devote to sleep, a courier, quite out of breath, came in and told him that an Armenian, followed by a posse of friends, had in the night surprised his palace at Amandabat, destroyed all the most valuable furniture in it, and would have carried off his wife and children, doubtless to make slaves of them, had not the domestics, when the first fright was over, made head against him. The courier added, that a bloody skirmish ensued, in which his servants had the advantage at last; that the Armenian's friends were all killed upon the spot, but that the leader was taken alive. "I thank thee, oh Ali!" (the prophet most revered by the Persians next to Mahomet,) cried Aliverda, "for affording me the means to revenge so enormous an attempt. What! whilst I make a sacrifice of my days and my repose to the good of Persia, while through my cares and toils, the meanest Persian subject lives secure from injustice and violence, shall an audacious stranger come to injure me in what is most dear to me! Let him be thrown into a dungeon, and give him a quantity of wretched food, sufficient to preserve him for the torments to which I destine him." The courier withdrew, charged with these orders to them who had the Armenian in custody.

But Aliverda, growing cool again, cried out, "What is it, O God, that I have done! Is it thus I maintain the glory of so many years? Shall one single moment eclipse all my virtue? That stranger has cruelly provoked me; but what impelled him to it? No man commits evil merely for the plea-

sure of doing it: there is always a motive, which passion or prejudice present to us under the mask of equity; and it must needs be some motive of this kind that blinded the Armenian to the dreadful consequences of his attempt. Doubtless I must have injured the wretch."

He dispatched immediately an express to Amadabat, with an order under his own hand, not to make the prisoner feel any other hardship than the privation of liberty. Tranquil after this act of moderation, he applied himself to public business, till he should have leisure to sift this particular case to the bottom. From the strict enquiries he ordered to be made, he learned that one of his inferior officers had done very considerable damage to the Armenian, considering the mediocrity of his fortune; and that he himself had slighted the complaints brought against him. Eased by this discovery, he called for the Armenian, whose countenance expressed more confusion than terror, and passed this sentence upon him:

"Vindictive stranger, there were some grounds for thy resentment; thou didst think I had justly incurred thy hatred; I forgive thee the injury thou hast done me. But thou hast carried thy vengeance to excess; thou hast attacked a man whom thou oughtest to respect; nay, thou hast attempted to make thy vengeance fall upon innocent heads, and therefore I ought to punish thee. Go then, and reflect in solitude on the wretchedness of a man that gives full swing to his passions. Thy punishment, which justice requires of me, will be sufficiently tempered by clemency; and thy repentance may permit me to shorten the term."

Demetrius Poliorcetes, who had done singular

services for the people of the city of Athens, on setting out for a war in which he was engaged, left his wife and children to their protection. He lost the battle, and was obliged to seek security for his person in flight. He doubted not, at first, but that he should find a safe asylum among his good friends the Athenians; but those ungrateful men refused to receive him, and even sent back to him his wife and children, under pretence that they probably might not be safe in Athens, where the enemy might come and take them.

This conduct pierced the heart of Demetrius; for nothing is so affecting to an honest mind, as the ingratitude of those we love, and to whom we have done singular services. Some time afterwards this prince recovered his affairs, and came with a large army to lay siege to Athens. The Athenians, persuaded that they had no pardon to expect from Demetrius, determined to die sword in hand, and passed a decree, which condemned to death those who should first propose to surrender to that prince; but they did not recollect that there was but little corn in the city, and that they would, in a short time, be in want of bread.

Want soon made them sensible of their error, and, after having suffered hunger for a long time, the most reasonable among them said, "It would be better that Demetrius should kill us at once, than for us to die by the lingering death of famine; perhaps he will have pity on our wives and children." They then opened to him the gates of the city.

Demetrius, having taken possession of the city, ordered that all the married men should assemble in a spacious place appointed for the purpose, and

that the soldiery, sword in hand, should surround them. Cries and lamentations were then heard from every quarter of the city, women embracing their husbands, children their parents, and all taking an eternal farewell of each other.

When the married men were all thus collected, Demetrius, for whom an elevated situation was provided, reproached them for their ingratitude in the most feeling manner, insomuch that he himself could not help shedding tears. Demetrius for some time remained silent, while the Athenians expected that the next words he uttered would be order his soldiers to massacre them all.

It is hardly possible to say what must have been their surprise, when they heard that good prince say, "I wish to convince you how ungenerously you have treated me; for it was not to an enemy you have refused assistance, but to a prince who loved you, who still loves you, and who wishes to revenge himself only by granting you pardon, and by being still your friend. Return to your own homes. While you have been here, my soldiers have been filling your houses with provisions."

When Louis XII. ascended the throne of France, many of the great men of the court, who, when he was merely Duke of Orleans, had behaved to him with neglect, were afraid to present themselves before him. Louis nobly said, "The King of France disdains to revenge the injuries committed against the Duke of Orleans."

He was once pressed by some of his ministers to seize upon the territory of a prince who had offended him. "I had rather," replied he, "lose a kingdom, which might perhaps be afterwards restored to me, than lose my honour, which can

never suffer any reparation. The advantages that my enemies gain over me, can astonish no one. They make use of means that I have ever disdained to employ: these are, treachery and the violation of the laws of the gospel. If honour be banished from the breasts of all other men, it should keep its seat in the breast of a sovereign."

VIRTUE.

SENTIMENTS.

*Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds ;
And, though a late, a sure reward succeeds.*

VIRTUE is the surest foundation both of reputation and fortune ; and the great step to greatness is to be honest.

He that would govern his actions by the laws of virtue, must keep guilt from the recesses of his heart, and remember, that the pleasures of fancy, and the motions of desire, are more dangerous as they are more hidden, since they escape the awe of observation, and operate equally in every situation, without the concurrence of external opportunities.

He who desires no virtue in his companion, has no virtue in himself.

Many men mistake the love, for the practice, of virtue, and are not so much good men, as the friends of goodness.

Virtue is most laudable in that state which makes it most difficult.

To dread no eye, and to suspect no tongue, is the great prerogative of innocence ; an exemption granted only to invariable virtue.

Virtue has such a peculiar beauty and comeliness, that even men of the most opposite character are impelled to reverence it in others, whatever be their station. Tully very justly observes, that

if virtue were to appear in a human form, all men would adore her.

Virtue is the greatest ornament to youth; to the poor, serviceable; to the unfortunate and afflicted, a sure support: she ennobles the slave and exalts nobility, and is the brightest gem in the crown of a sovereign.

None but the virtuous dare to hope in bad circumstances. In the deepest distress, virtue is more illustrious than vice in its highest prosperity.

EXAMPLES.

M. Porcius Cato, the Elder, lived with that integrity, that, though he was fifty times accused, he was yet so many times adjudged innocent; nor did he obtain this by favour or wealth, but against the favour and riches of almost the whole city. His honesty and severity had raised him up very many enemies, and much of envy, for he spared no man, nor was he a friend to any, who was not so to the commonwealth. At last, being accused in his old age, he required and obtained that Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, one of the chief of his enemies, should be appointed for his judge: but even he acquitted him, and gave sentence that he was innocent. Through this his confident action, he ever after lived both in great glory and equal security.

Poedaretus, of Lacedæmon, on presenting himself in order to be admitted a member of the Council of Three Hundred, (the Lacedæmonian House of Commons, we will suppose,) was refused a seat. Did he, in consequence thereof, labour night and day to excite discord among his fellow-citizens, and to obstruct the essential operations of government? No: he went away rejoicing that

Sparta was found to contain three hundred men of greater worth than himself.

A Spartan lady had five sons in the army, and was in hourly expectation of news from the field of battle. A messenger returns from the camp; and, with trembling agitation, she applies to him for information. "Your five sons," said he, "are slain." "Base slave! did I ask thee that?" "Yet we have gained the victory." "Thanks to the gods!" exclaimed the mother: and she instantly flew to the temple, in order to offer up her thanks.

During a period of the Roman history, Porsenna, King of the Tuscans, laid siege to the city of Rome, and was on the point of reducing it to the last extremity. A young Roman, fraught with a noble ardour, repairs in the disguise of an Etrurian, into the enemy's camp, advances even to the royal tent, and, mistaking him for the king, stabs the secretary to the heart. On being seized, and asked his name, "I am a Roman," replied he, sternly, "and my name is Mutius. Thou beholdest, in me, one enemy who wanted to kill another; and I shall not have less courage to suffer death than I had to give it." In the mean time, as if desirous to punish his right hand for having disappointed him of his prey, he put it upon a red hot coal, which had been just kindled for a sacrifice; and he beheld it gradually consume away, without betraying the smallest sense of pain. The king, struck with this prodigy of resolution, ordered him to be removed from the altar and to be restored to his liberty. "Since," said Mutius to him, "thou knowest the value of virtue, what thou shouldst not have torn from me by threats, I will freely grant to thy generosity. Know, then, that there are three hundred of us young Romans, who have sworn, before the gods,

that we will kill thee in the midst of thy guards, or perish, one and all of us in the attempt." Por-senna, equally struck with admiration and terror at his speech, immediately raised the siege.

Among the prisoners whom Mithridates took in one of the many battles he fought with the Romans, an officer, named Pomponius, was one day brought before him dangerously wounded. The king asked him if, should he spare his life, he might reckon him among the number of his friends? "Yes," replied the prisoner, "if you make peace with the Romans: if not, it would be a crime in me to hesitate upon the subject."

In the history of China, we read of a Chinese, who, justly irritated at the many acts of oppression committed by the grandees, waited upon the emperor; and, after enumerating his complaints, "I come," said he, "to present myself a victim to that death which six hundred of my fellow-citizens have already experienced for a similar remonstrance. At the same time, I give thee notice to prepare for a series of fresh executions: for in China there are still eighteen thousand trusty patriots, who, for the same cause, will successively apply to thee for the same reward." The emperor, savage as he was, could not resist so much resolution: the above words sunk deep into his heart; and making an immediate enquiry into the grievances complained of, he not only effectually suppressed them, but put to death the culprits who had occasioned so much misery to his subjects.

The same history furnishes another striking instance of patriotism, and that in a female bosom. An emperor of China, pursued by the victorious arms of one of his subjects, endeavoured to avail himself of the blind respect which, in that coun-

try, a son entertains for the commands of his mother, in order to oblige that subject to disarm. For this purpose, he dispatched an officer to the mother; and he, with a poignard in his hand, tells her that there is but one alternative before her, death or obedience. "Would it please your master," replied she to him, with a smile of bitterness, "to hear that I am ignorant of the tacit though sacred compact, which unites every subject to his sovereign, and by which the former are bound to obey, and the latter to rule with justice? By himself hath this compact been originally violated. Base bearer of the orders of a tyrant, learn, from a woman, what in such a situation, one owes to her country." With these words, she snatches the poignard from the officer, stabs herself with it, and says, "Slave, if yet there is any virtue remaining in thee, carry to my son this bloody poignard; tell him to revenge his country, to punish the tyrant; no longer has he aught to dread for me, to excite in him a scruple, or to restrain him from the paths of virtue."

In the eleventh century, Godiva, wife of the Duke of Mercia, (a branch of the Saxon heptarchy,) manifested her love for her country by a singular exploit. For beauty and virtue this princess stands the foremost of her age. Her husband having imposed a very oppressive tax upon the inhabitants of Coventry, she strongly urged him to suppress it; but the duke, a man of unaccountable caprice, refused her request, unless she would traverse the whole town naked. Godiva, despairing of success by any other means, submitted to his brutal whim; and, having issued orders that the inhabitants should remain confined to their houses, and not look at her, upon pain of death, she mounted on horseback, and

rode through all the streets of Coventry, without any other covering than what a copious head of hair afforded her. One man, instigated by curiosity, peeped out at a window; and his imprudence was immediately punished with death. In memory of this event, the remains of a statue, in the attitude of a person gazing, are still to be seen upon that very spot of the ancient city of Coventry.

During the threatened invasion of Britain, in the course of a former war with France, when there seemed to be a probability that the actual service of every member of the community might be required for the security of the kingdom, an Englishman thus frankly expressed his sentiments on the occasion: "As I am neither soldier nor seaman," said he, "I will not scruple to acknowledge that I have no pretensions to bravery; but, as a citizen, my purse is at the service of my country; my last guinea will I with pleasure resign for the good of old England; but in no extremity will I be prevailed upon to take up arms."

Of the truth of the following story, which happened nearly at the same period with the above, the reader may rest assured. In a company, one day, the conversation happened to turn upon the supposed intention which the French had formed, of making a descent upon England. A child of about nine years of age, after listening with great attention to what was said, suddenly started up from his chair, and ran forward to his father:—"Pray, papa," says he, "if the French come, will they bring any little boys with them?" "I can't tell," replies the father; "but why do you ask?" "Because," replies the other, clinching his fists, "I would box them one after another; and give them such a drubbing, that they would never

wish to come again." The gentlemen present, as it may be supposed, were enchanted with this infantine, though noble impulse of resentment against the declared enemies of the country; and taking him in their arms, they loaded him with caresses and with praises for his patriotic resolution.

Julius Drusus, a tribune of the temple, had a house that, in many places, lay open to the eyes of the neighbourhood. There came a workman to him, and told him that, at the price of five talents he would so alter it, that it should not be liable to that inconvenience. "I will give thee ten talents," said he, "if thou canst make my house conspicuous in every room of it, so that all the city may behold after what manner I lead my life."

When the senate of Rome was in debate about the election of a censor, and that Valerianus was in nomination, Trebellius Pollio writes, that the universal acclamation of the senators was, "The life of Valerianus is a censorship; let him be the judge of us all, who is better than all of us: let him judge of the senate who cannot be charged with any crime; let him pass sentence upon our life, against whom nothing is to be objected. Valerianus was almost a censor from his cradle; Valerianus is a censor in his whole life: he is a prudent senator; modest, grave; a friend to good men, an enemy to tyrants; an enemy to the vicious, but a greater unto vice. We receive this man for our censor: him we will imitate: he is the most noble amongst us, the best in blood, of exemplary life, of excellent learning, of choice manners, and the example of antiquity."

Plato, the son of Ariston, happening to be at Olympia, pitched his tent with some persons whom

he knew not, and to whom he was himself unknown. But he so endeared himself to them by his engaging manners, living with them in conformity to their customs, that the strangers were wonderfully delighted at this accidental intercourse. He made no mention either of the academy or of Socrates, and contented himself with telling them that his name was Plato. When these men came to Athens, Plato entertained them in a friendly manner. His guests addressing him, said, "Shew us, oh, Plato, your namesake, the pupil of Socrates, and introduce us into his academy, and be the means of our deriving some instruction from him." He, smiling with his accustomed good humour, exclaimed, "I am that person." They were filled with astonishment at the idea of their having been ignorantly associated with such a personage, who had conducted himself toward them without the least insolence or pride, and who had given them a proof that, without the usual display of his known accomplishments, he was able to conciliate their good-will.

A young man, named Eretius, was for a considerable time a follower of Zeno. On his return home, his father asked him what he had learned. The other replied, that would hereafter appear. On this, the father, being enraged, beat his son, who, bearing it patiently, and without complaining, said, he had learned this—to endure a parent's anger.

Phocion, son of Phocus, who had often been the general of his countrymen, was condemned to death; and, being in prison, was about to drink the hemlock. When the executioner held out to him the cup, his relations asked him if he had any commands for his son. "I order him," said

Phocion, "to bear no animosity nor revenge against the Athenians on account of this poison which I now drink."

Codrus, the last and best king of Athens, had reigned about one-and-twenty years, beloved by his subjects, and dreaded by his enemies. His country was at length invaded by the Heraclidæ, and in danger of falling a sacrifice to their conquering swords; when the good old king found means of saving it by the following stratagem, though at the expense of his own life. He was informed by his spies, that the enemy had consulted the oracle about the success of the war, and had been promised a complete victory, "provided they could avoid killing the Athenian king;" for which reason they had taken all proper care to prevent it. Codrus, to frustrate their precaution, went one night into their camp, disguised like a homely countryman, and fell a quarrelling among some of their guards; from words they fell to blows, and the king, who came with a resolution to lose his life, bestirred himself with such bravery, that he soon fell dead at their feet. On the morrow, when his body was found, covered with wounds, and weltering in his own blood, the enemy, recollecting the words of the oracle, were struck with such dread that they immediately marched out of the Athenian territories, without striking one stroke, or committing any further hostility. When his death had reached his subjects' ears, they conceived such a veneration for their magnanimous prince, that they esteemed none worthy to bear the royal title after him; and, from that time, put the government of Athens under elective magistrates, called Archons, or Chiefs. Their gratitude did not end here; they



chose his son, Medon, to that dignity, and continued it to his posterity during twelve generations; that is, for nearly two hundred years.

The city of Rome was once in the utmost consternation, being in danger of being swallowed up by an earthquake, which had already opened a monstrous gulf in their very forum. All the citizens and slaves had in vain tried to fill it up with all the stones, earth, and rubbish they could get, far and near. At length they had recourse to their augurs and soothsayers, who told them that the impending mischief was not to be prevented but by flinging into the chasm the thing in which the power and strength of Rome consisted. While they were deliberating about the meaning of this intricate answer, Curtius, a noble youth, presented himself to them, and asked them whether they had any stronger or more valuable support than arms and valour? He scarcely stayed for an answer, but being fully persuaded that his death would prove the means of saving his country, went and accoutred himself in stately armour, and being mounted on a horse richly caparisoned, rode through crowds of spectators of all ranks, till he came to the dreadful gulf. Here, after he had devoted his life afresh to the safety of Rome, with an intrepid courage, more easily to be admired than followed, he leaped into the chasm with his horse, whilst the astonished multitude celebrated the heroic deed with the highest praises. His memory has been ever since held in great admiration by all nations, and is still celebrated in history as one of the noblest instances of patriotism.

Cimon, the brave Athenian general, had gained so many glorious victories over the Persians and other enemies of Athens, that he had raised that

republic to a great height of power and grandeur, and himself to the highest post of honour in it. Cimon was an accomplished commander, knew when and how to make use of arms when he was bent upon new conquests, or how to weaken an enemy, by raising revolts among them by his secret intrigues. At home he was a perfect statesman; and partly by his authority, but more by his affable behaviour, had made a considerable reformation in the commonwealth.

Cimon had two powerful enemies in it: the one, Themistocles, a haughty and ambitious rival; the other, the common people, who could not brook to see their power curtailed, and their credit lessened by that worthy patriot, who thought it more just and expedient to bestow the administration of public affairs on persons of quality and note, than to raise men of the lowest rank to it. These, therefore, animated by Themistocles, assembled in a tumultuous manner in the forum, and demanded an ostracism of the magistrates; which they not daring to deny at that juncture, Cimon was thereby divested of all his dignities, condemned to banishment, and even forbid to serve as a volunteer in their then war against the Lacedemonians.

It was well for the republic that Cimon did not carry his resentment against them so high as many others would have done, else he might then easily have ruined them. For soon after his banishment they were so broken into factions at home, and had such powerful enemies to fight against abroad, that they must have sunk under the double weight. In this emergency their pride was forced to yield, and he was again recalled to save his country, after their defeat at the famous battle of Tanagra. The noble exile did not hesitate a mo-

ment, but returned to Athens, and forgetting all but his love to his country, set about reforming the abuses which had crept in during his absence, which was no sooner done, than he bent his arms against the Persians, and gained a fresh victory over them ; after which he invaded the island of Cyprus, and, had he not been unfortunately killed at the siege of Citium, it is thought he would have conquered that, and the whole kingdom of Egypt.

Æneas, the son of Anchises, prince of Troy, is chiefly famed and distinguished from other ancient heroes, for his filial affection and piety to his decrepid father. The old prince was eighty years of age, when the city of Troy, his capital, was, after a ten years' siege, taken by the Greeks, and burnt : so that he must have inevitably perished in the flames, or fallen a sacrifice to the enemy's sword, had not his brave and affectionate son made his way through all dangers to come to his rescue, and on his shoulders conveyed him to a place of safety. This noble action it is that raises Æneas's character above all his other exploits, and has received the greatest commendation from all the writers of antiquity, as a pattern worthy the imitation of posterity.

Manlius, the Roman dictator, for his haughtiness and cruelty surnamed Imperious, had made so ill a use of dictatorial dignity, that, immediately after his term of service was expired, a process was begun against him, and several criminal articles laid to his charge, of which he had a copy delivered to him, that he might either clear himself from, or be punished for them. One of them, among the rest, was, that he had confined his son Titus to his country-seat, and obliged him to work there among his servants and slaves, under pretence that he had an impediment in his

speech, and was a youth of a dull and slow capacity. The whole city had already condemned him, both as an unnatural parent and tyrannical magistrate, and were in hopes to see some severe punishment inflicted upon him. None were found that pitied him but his much-injured son, Titus, who took it so to heart that he should furnish any aggravation to his father's guilt, that he took up a noble resolution to save him at the hazard of his own life. Accordingly, on the day before the trial, he left his father's farm early in the morning, and came directly to the house of Pomponius, the tribune, who was appointed to try him, and sent to desire to speak with him. The tribune easily admitted him to a private conference, not doubting but he came to bring some fresh accusation against his barbarous father; but he was soon undeceived, to his great surprise and astonishment, when Titus, drawing out a dagger, clapped it to his breast, and swore that he was come with full purpose to sheath it in his heart, unless he engaged himself by the most solemn oaths to desist from the prosecution against Manlius. Pomponius was so terrified at this unexpected compliment, that he was glad to promise him what he asked, and to swear to the faithful performance of it; after which, Titus contentedly returned to his confinement. The prosecution was accordingly dropped; and the people, who could not but highly admire the exalted piety of the son towards a most inhuman father, applauded the tribune's conduct in rewarding it with Manlius's discharge. From that time both Titus, and, for his sake, the haughty Manlius, became the admiration of Rome, and both were raised to some of the highest dignities in the government.

Antigonus also is justly famed for his piety to

his unfortunate father, once the potent king of Macedonia, but, through a long series of ill successes, reduced to the lowest state by his ungrateful son-in-law, Seleucus, king of Syria. Demetrius, which was the unhappy king's name, finding himself forsaken by his treacherous army, and ready to be betrayed into the hands of his enemy, was advised by the few friends that were left about him, to surrender himself, which he accordingly did. Seleucus at first received him with tokens of the greatest respect and friendship, protesting that he thought himself more obliged to fortune for giving him this opportunity of shewing his clemency towards him, than if he had gained a complete victory over him. But he soon after convinced him that he meant nothing more, by all these florid expressions, than to amuse him, and secure him so fast that he should never have it in his power to regain his liberty. Accordingly, he sent him soon after into a strong castle in an island, and there kept him close prisoner, where he might have leisure to reflect on his past misfortunes, without the least possibility of remedying them. When Demetrius found himself in this forlorn and desperate situation, he sent a letter to his generous son, to acquaint him with it ; not to desire him to undertake anything towards regaining his liberty, for that he expressly forbid him ; but, on the contrary, to enjoin him to look upon his father as dead, and himself as king in his stead, to govern his subjects with moderation and justice, and by no means to part with any cities, lands, or treasures, to Seleucus, by way of ransom, or to give credit to any letter to the contrary, though written with his own hand, and sealed with his own seal. This noble disinterestedness in the father made so deep an impression

on the heart of the heroic son, that, instead of obeying his commands, he sought for nothing so much as how to procure his freedom. But as he was too inferior in strength to attempt it by force of arms, he endeavoured to obtain it by pacific means, by interesting several princes and states to sue to Seleucus for his liberty, whilst himself offered him all the provinces which he held in Greece, which were very considerable, together with some large sums of money, and at length his own person, as hostage for his father's release. Seleucus lent a deaf ear to all his offers; but Demetrius, being afraid lest his generous son should make such new and large ones as might be thought worth accepting, seems to have only sought how to prevent it by hastening his own death, by giving himself up to drinking and banqueting, which, with his confinement and want of exercise, brought an incurable distemper upon him, which carried him off in the third year of his imprisonment. Antigonus's piety did not end with his father's life; but when he heard of his death, and that his ashes were sent to him by Seleucus, he sailed with a noble fleet to the Archipelago to meet them, deposited them in a rich urn of gold, which he placed on the poop of his royal galley under a stately canopy, set his own crown upon it, and stood by it in deep mourning, and with his eyes bathed with tears. In this mournful pomp they entered the harbour of Corinth, where he left all his father's trophies as standing monuments of his former valour and success, but sent the royal urn to Demetria, a favourite city, built by the deceased king, and called by his own name.

Herod, the haughty and cruel king of Judea, had, in one of his desperate fits of jealousy, caused

his virtuous and innocent queen, Marianne, a princess of the most exalted character and merit, to be unjustly condemned to death, and led to public execution. He had two noble sons by her, Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had sent to Rome to be educated under the emperor Augustus's eye. As soon as these young princes received the melancholy news of their mother's catastrophe, they could not forbear expressing their grief and resentment at in such terms as their love and piety towards that best of mothers inspired them with, but which so enraged their jealous father, that he immediately caused them to be tried for treason, and condemned to lose their heads. At the same time he caused Antipater, a younger son by another wife, and a prince of a base character, to be declared his successor. Among those who came to dissuade him from putting these two brave princes to death, and exposing his old age to the mercy of the arrogant and ambitious Antipater, was Tyro, an old, honest, and experienced officer, who, upon his admittance, did assure him that this young prince did entertain some treasonable designs against his life and crown, and was on that account become odious to the chiefs of the Jewish nation. He had scarce done speaking, when the suspicious king ordered him either to declare immediately who those Jewish chiefs were, or else to be led to the rack, and there have their names extorted from him. Tyro was accordingly sent to the torture, being unwilling to sacrifice so many brave men to Herod's fury. They had already begun their bloody office upon him, when the brave old general must in all likelihood have expired in the midst of his torments, as many more of both sexes had done before under that cruel tyrant, had not his brave

son freed him at the expense of his own life. Tyro, which was the brave youth's name, came at that very instant, and, to save his father from the impending danger, boldly confessed that he alone, without his father's knowledge, had conspired to murder the king, and save his two sons from death; upon which the old man was released, and his generous son, in all likelihood, put to death; though Josephus, who relates this story, mentions nothing of it; but only adds, that his confession was believed by none but the jealous Herod, who immediately sent orders to have his two gallant and worthy sons strangled in the castle of Sebaste.

An eminent citizen, who had lived in good fashion and credit, was, by a train of accidents, and by an unavoidable perplexity in his affairs, reduced to a low condition. There is a modesty usually attending faultless poverty, which made him rather chuse to reduce his manner of living in his present circumstances, than solicit his friends, in order to support the show of an estate, when the substance was gone. His wife, who was a woman of sense and virtue, behaved herself on this occasion with uncommon decency, and never appeared so amiable in his eyes as now. Instead of upbraiding him with the ample fortune she had brought, or the many great offers she had refused for his sake, she redoubled all the instances of her affection, while her husband was continually pouring out his heart to her, in complaints that he had ruined the best woman in the world. He sometimes came home at a time when she did not expect him, and surprised her in tears; which she endeavoured to conceal, and always put on an air of cheerfulness to receive him. To lessen their expense, their eldest daughter, whom

I shall call Amanda, was sent into the country to the house of an honest farmer, who had married a servant of the family. This young woman was apprehensive of the ruin which was approaching, and had privately engaged a friend in the neighbourhood to give her an account of what passed from time to time in her father's affairs. Amanda was in the bloom of her youth and beauty, when the lord of the manor, who often called in at the farmer's house as he followed his country sports, fell passionately in love with her. He was a man of great generosity, but, from a loose education, had contracted a hearty aversion to marriage. He therefore entertained a design upon Amanda's virtue; which, at present, he thought fit to keep private. The innocent creature, who never suspected his intentions, was pleased with his person, and, having observed his growing passion for her, hoped, by so advantageous a match, she might quickly be in a capacity of supporting her impoverished relations. One day, as he called to see her, he found her in tears over a letter she had just received from her friend, which gave an account that her father had lately been stripped of every thing by an execution. The lover, who with some difficulty found out the cause of her grief, took this occasion to make her a proposal. It is impossible to express Amanda's confusion, when she found his pretensions were not honourable. She was now deserted of all her hopes, and had no power to speak; but, rushing from him in the utmost disturbance, locked herself up in her chamber. He immediately dispatched a messenger to her father with the following letter:

“SIR,

“I have heard of your misfortune, and have offered your daughter, if she will live with me, to settle on her four hundred pounds a year, and to lay down the sum for which you are now distressed. I will be so ingenuous as to tell you, that I do not intend marriage! but, if you are wise, you will use your authority with her not to be too nice, when she has an opportunity of saving you and your family, and of making herself happy. I am, &c.”

This letter came to the hands of Amanda's mother; she opened and read it with great surprise and concern. She did not think it proper to explain herself to the messenger; but desiring him to call again the next morning, she wrote to her daughter as follows:

“DEAREST CHILD,

“Your father and I have just now received a letter from a gentleman who pretends love to you, with a proposal that insults our misfortunes, and would throw us into a lower degree of misery than any thing which is come upon us. How could this barbarous man think, that the tenderest of parents would be tempted to supply their wants by giving up the best of children to infamy and ruin? It is a mean and cruel artifice to make this proposal at a time when he thinks our necessities must compel us to any thing; but we will not eat the bread of shame; and therefore we charge thee not to think of us, but to avoid the snare which is laid for thy virtue. Beware of pitying us; it is not so bad as you have perhaps been told. All things will yet be well, and I shall write, my child, better news.

“I have been interrupted. I know not how I

was moved to say things would mend. As I was going on, I was startled by the noise of one that knocked at the door, and had brought us an unexpected supply of a debt which has long been owing. Oh! I will now tell thee all. It is some days I have lived almost without support, having conveyed what little money I could raise to your poor father. Thou wilt weep to think where he is; yet be assured he will soon be at liberty. The cruel letter would have broken his heart; but I have concealed it from him. I have no companion at present besides little Fanny, who stands watching my looks as I write, and is crying for her sister. She says she is sure you are not well, having discovered that my present trouble is about you. But do not think I would thus repeat my sorrows to grieve thee. No! it is to entreat thee not to make them insupportable, by adding what would be worse than all. Let us bear cheerfully an affliction which we have not brought upon ourselves, and remember there is a power who can better deliver us out of it than by the loss of thy innocence. Heaven preserve my dear child!

“Thy affectionate mother, —.”

The messenger, notwithstanding he promised to deliver this letter to Amanda, carried it first to his master, who, he imagined, would be glad to have an opportunity of giving it into her hands himself. His master was impatient to know the success of his proposal, and therefore broke open the letter privately, to see the contents. He was not a little moved at so true a picture of virtue in distress, but, at the same time, was infinitely surprised to find his offers rejected. However, he resolved not to suppress the letter, but carefully sealed it up again, and carried it to Amanda. All his endea-

vours to see her were in vain, till she was assured he brought a letter from her mother. He would not part with it, but on condition that she would read it without leaving the room.—While she was perusing it, he fixed his eyes on her face with the deepest attention; her concern gave a new softness to her beauty, and when she burst into tears, he could no longer refrain from bearing a part in her sorrow, and telling her, that he too had read the letter, and was resolved to make reparation for having been the occasion of it. My reader will not be displeased to see the second epistle, which he now wrote to Amanda's mother.

“MADAM,

“I am full of shame, and will never forgive myself if I have not your pardon for what I lately wrote. It was far from my intention to add trouble to the afflicted; nor could any thing but my being a stranger to you have betrayed me into a fault, for which, if I live, I shall endeavour to make you amends as a son. You cannot be unhappy, while Amanda is your daughter; nor shall be, if any thing can prevent it which is in the power of, Madam,

“Your most obedient,

“Humble servant, ——.”

This letter he sent by his steward, and soon after went up to town himself, to complete the generous act he had now resolved on. By his friendship and assistance, Amanda's father was quickly in a condition of retrieving his perplexed affairs. To conclude, he married Amanda, and enjoyed the double satisfaction of having restored a worthy family to their former prosperity, and of making himself happy by an alliance to their virtues.

The emperors of China select their wives out of

their own subjects; and, provided they are accomplished with virtue and beauty, they regard not their estate or condition.

A merchant of Provence, of a most amiable character, but of narrow circumstances, met with some considerable losses in trade, and became a bankrupt. Being reduced to penury and want, he went to Paris to seek some assistance. He waited on all his old customers in trade, represented to them his misfortunes, which he had taken every method to avoid, and begged them to enable him to pursue his business, assuring those to whom he was indebted, that his only wish was to be in a condition to pay them, and that he should die contentedly, could he but accomplish that wish. Every one he had applied to felt for his misfortunes, and promised to assist him, excepting one to whom he owed a thousand crowns, and who, instead of pitying his misfortunes, threw him into prison.

The unfortunate merchant's son, who was about twenty-two years of age, being informed of the sorrowful situation of his father, hastened to Paris, threw himself at the feet of the unrelenting creditor, and, drowned in tears, besought him, with the most affecting expressions, to condescend to restore him to his father, protesting to him that, if he would not throw obstacles in the way to his father's re-establishing his affairs, of the possibility of which they had great reason to hope, he should be the first paid. He implored him to have pity on his youth, and to have some feeling for the misfortunes of an aged mother, encumbered with eight children, reduced to want, and nearly on the point of perishing. Lastly, that, if these considerations were not capable of moving him to pity, he entreated him, at least, to permit

him to be confined in prison instead of his father, in order that he might be restored to his family.

The youth uttered these expressions in so affecting a manner, that the creditor, struck with so much virtue and generosity, at once softened into tears, and raising the youth from his humble posture, "Ah! my son," said he, "your father shall be released. So much love and respect which you have shewn for him make me ashamed of myself. I have carried this matter too far; but I will endeavour for ever to efface the remembrance of it from your mind. I have an only daughter, who is worthy of you: she would do as much for me as you have done for your father. I will give her you, and, with her, all my fortune. Accept the offer I make you, and let us hasten to your father, to release him, and ask his consent."

Adrastus, a man of deep erudition, profound reading, and of a philosophical turn of mind, chose principally to reside in the country, chiefly for the uninterrupted pleasures of contemplation. He was a man, not only of learning and property, but of philanthropy, and equally celebrated in his neighbourhood for wisdom and generosity. It happened that one of his tenants, although he rented the smallest farm, and had a very large family depending on its cultivation, was by far the most cheerful, and well disposed. His cottage, though small, was dressed by the hand of neatness; and frugality, with simplicity, were ever the guardians that attended upon his happy family. All situations and all seasons, from the beginning of spring to the end of winter, were rendered delightful by the happy bias of his constitution, which enabled him to turn all events to his advantage. In sorrow he

was humiliated, and in prosperity he was grateful. He had lived as tenant of that very farm when the father of Adrastus first took possession of the estate, of which it was a part; nor had he ever made a failure in the payment of his rent, nor ever had a quarrel in the parish. His toil was sweetened and alleviated by the thoughts of providing for his offspring; and this constant employment not only inspired him with health, but did not allow him leisure to indulge the whimsical wants of imagination, at the same time that it protected him from all improper, impertinent, or vicious passions. He had in his time put many estranged hands together; reconciled many pettish, peevish differences; settled many family breaches; suggested, while he was churchwarden, many a little scheme for the benefit of the poor; and never felt one emotion of envy at surveying the possessions of the rich.

These unassuming, though solid virtues, gained him such reputation in the country wherein he resided, that he obtained, as it were proverbially, the appellation of "The Contented Cottager."—He was, in truth,

"Passing rich, with forty pounds a year."

An account of him was transmitted to Adrastus, who went to pay him a visit, in order to see how truly report had characterized him; for, though Adrastus lived and did much good in the country, yet his abstracted, philosophical, and sedentary situation, made him, personally, but little acquainted with even his own tenants, who were generally turned to the steward for the conversation and business of quarter-day.

A man of the contented cottager's disposition, however, was too important an object not to excite the curiosity of a philosopher; and, accordingly, he

set apart one afternoon, or rather evening, on purpose for this entertainment. Adrastus arrived at the farmer's about half an hour after sun-set; when "twilight grey had in her sober livery all things clad." The farmer, whose name was Matthew Mendland, was sitting at the door of his little cottage, smoking his pipe, and surrounded by his children; his wife was leaning over the fire, preparing a decent and wholesome supper. The farmer knew his landlord personally, and rose, as to his superior, offering him the best seat in his homely cottage.

"Here your honour finds me," said the farmer, "in a small but happy place. I have been upon your ground these many years; and, if you think good to renew my lease, which expires at Michaelmas, I shall most likely end my life in your service. If your honour likes me, I like you. Your dues are always ready to the hour; and I have no more reason to complain of my landlord, than he has of his tenant: and so—." Adrastus interrupted him by desiring to see the lease, and to have a pen and ink, for the purpose of renewing it upon the spot. "As to pen and ink, Sir," replied the farmer, "I have no use for them; and so I never keep any by me. I can't read or write, and so such things are of no service; but if your honour wants to write, I can send to the shop for paper and ink, and I can easily send one of my boys to the green to pick up a quill; or if your honour is in a hurry, Tom shall borrow a feather from the old gander, who is, I see, just waddling to his bed." "It don't signify at present, farmer," said Adrastus, "I'll sign it another time. But don't you really know any thing about books? I actually thought you was a scholar; that you had employed all your spare time in study; that you gathered your notions of economy, industry, and paternal propriety, from historic examples, or tradi-

tionary annals.” “No, really, Sir, not I,” said the farmer; “I am a very illiterate man. My father could not afford to give me an education, and I have had neither time nor opportunity since. Nature and the use of my eyes have been my only instructors; and if I have been able to live respectably to the age of threescore, and even to rear up my children soberly, cleanly, and virtuously, I owe it merely to them. Indeed, to say the truth, my business, as a farmer, threw in my way a thousand instructive objects. My yard is stocked with improvement: at the end of that small slip of a garden, I have a bit of a bee-hive, filled with little industrious animals, who tell me what a shame it would be to lead the life of a drone: my maxim upon this is, Sir, that he who don’t make some honey, ought to eat none; and so this made me indefatigable to earn my meal before I sat down to it. Nay, in this part of my duty, I am further instructed by the little creatures who inhabit the mole-hill. Is it possible for a man to see the poor things hard at work for the day of necessity, and not take the hint, and lay up a modicum for his own family? I have rested upon my spade, Sir, on purpose to look at their labours, and then I have gone to work again, lest they should have the sense to chide me for minding other people’s business more than my own. I have an old house-dog, your honour—Here, Honesty, Honesty, where are you, Honesty?—He, Sir, that aged animal, has kept my clothes by day, and my cottage by night, till he has not got a tooth in his head; and he does for me what I would do for one Thomas Trusty, whom I have loved since I was young, and no higher than my hand: he once did me a piece of service when it was most wanted, and while I have breath I shall never forget it. He, Sir, who has no gratitude, has no nature in him;

and an unnatural man is better dead than alive, because when a person does no good to his neighbour, he has no business here. We are all born to do something, and he who does a kindness deserves to be well remembered for it. With regard to my duty as a husband, I learn that from the very pigeons that coo and court around my dove-house. To this dear old dame I have been lawfully married forty years, and I cannot think what our great folks are about; I find such a pleasure in my constancy, as I am sure I could not receive from inconstancy; and the smiles of a good woman are a rich reward. With regard to the love I bear to these little ones, I am taught the duty which, as a father, I owe to them, by every living thing around me; the wren that builds her nest under my hovel, the fowls which peck about my yard, or swim upon my pond, the creatures which run about my pastures, teach me to be affectionate to their persons, and anxious for the preservation of my own offspring: and in this manner I have learned my lesson of wisdom and worship, truth and tenderness, from the beasts of my fields, and the birds of the air."

Here the good man paused, and directed his eldest daughter to draw some of his best harvest-home beer. Adrastus was astonished at his simplicity of manners, and at the soundness of his sense, as well as at the propriety of his remarks. "Farmer," said he, "you have distressed me, as well as delighted me. I came prepared to offer you assistance, and you have left me nothing to bestow. I have nothing that you have not, but a greater portion of money; and you are so truly contented as you are, that any addition would, perhaps, disconcert the economy of your plan. You are a happy farmer, and a natural philosopher, without the use of large, systematic folios, or the toils of a sedentary life. Give

me, however, the lease, that I may put it in my pocket: I will tear the lease, and ——.”

“How! your honour,” said the poor alarmed farmer, “tear my lease, instead of renewing it! Has then my freedom or my happiness offended you?”

“Yes, Mr. Mendland,” replied Adrastus, “I will tear the lease, because you have no farther use for it. The little spot of ground you have so long enriched by your care, shall henceforth be a patrimony to your inheritance; you are the proprietor of it from this day. Call on me to-morrow morning, and the writings of surrender shall be made out to you; for the time to come, I must be considered, not as your landlord, but your friend. Let me often see you at my table, and in my garden. In short, as frequently as the business of your family will permit, let me get to that wisdom and understanding which surpasseth mere mechanical science, in the society of the contented cottager.” The farmer would have dropped upon his knee; but Adrastus prevented him, saying, “Rise, Mr. Mendland, the obligation is on my side: I have been obliged. In exchange for a few acres, for which I have no occasion, you have given me a set of maxims and sentiments, that are as the purified thrice-refined gold of Ophir, and shall never depart from me.” From this moment, Adrastus and the farmer were intimate companions.

Louis XII. of France, who was a very economical prince, was told by some one that he had been represented in a play as an avaricious man. “I had rather,” replied he, “that my people should laugh at my avarice, than weep at my prodigality.” An officer of rank in his army having ill-treated a peasant, he ordered him to be made to live for a few days upon wine and meat. The man, tired of this very heating diet, requested permission to have

some bread allowed him. The king sent for him, and said to him, "How could you be so foolish as to ill-treat those persons who put bread into your mouth?"

The Duke of Montausier, tutor to the son of Louis XIV. gave very often practical lessons of virtue to his pupil. He took him one day into the miserable cottage of a peasant, near the superb palace of Versailles. "See, Sir," said he, "see, Sir, that it is under this straw roof, and in this wretched hovel, that a father, a mother, and their children exist, who are incessantly labouring to procure that gold with which your palace is decorated, and who are nearly perishing with hunger to supply your table with dainties." On the day on which M. de Montausier resigned his situation of governor to the dauphin, on his coming of age, he said to him, "If your royal highness is a man of honour, you will esteem me; if you are not, you will hate me; and I shall but too well know the reason of your dislike."

The wicked Judge Jeffries exhibited a striking instance of the power of virtue upon a mind the most vicious and profligate. He had no sooner retired to his lodgings at Taunton, to prepare himself for the opening of his bloody commission, than he was called upon by the minister of the church of St. Mary Magdalen, in that town, who in a very mild manner remonstrated with him upon the illegality and barbarity of the business upon which he was then going to proceed. Jeffries heard with great calmness, and soon after he returned to London, sent for him, and presented him to a stall in the cathedral of Bristol.

Virtue and prudence are forcibly described by King Lemuel, in the book of Proverbs. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above ru-

bies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; she will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life: she seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hands to the poor; yea, she reacheth out her hands to the needy; she openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness: she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed: her husband also, and he praiseth her: many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all," &c.

There is not a more illustrious or beautiful example of virtue for the imitation of youth in true or fabulous history, than the story of the young Joseph, (see IMPURITY,) as recorded in Genesis, chap. xxxix. Not only that instance, but the whole conduct of his life are such admirable examples of wisdom and virtue, as must excite the most perfect esteem and love of his character, more than any fictitious description that ever was yet written.

Mr. Seward, who has had access to some manuscript memoirs of the Fanshawe family, never yet published, tells us that therein Lady Fanshawe thus addressed her only son:

"Endeavour to be innocent as a dove, but as wise as a serpent; and let this lesson direct you most in the greater extremes of fortune: hate idleness, and avoid all passions. Be true in your words and actions. Unnecessarily deliver not your opinion; but when you do, let it be just, consistent, and plain. Be charitable in thought, word, and deed; and ever ready to forgive injuries done to yourself; and be more pleased to do

good than to receive good. Be civil and obliging to all, (dutiful where God and nature command you,) but a friend to one: and that friendship keep sacred, as the greatest tie upon earth; and be sure to ground it upon virtue, for no other is either happy or lasting. Endeavour always to be content in that state of life to which it hath pleased God to call you; and think it a great fault not to improve your time, either for the good of your soul, or the improvement of your understanding, health or estate; and as these are the most pleasing pastimes, so it will make you a cheerful old age, which is as necessary for you to design, as to make a provision to support the infirmities which decay of strength brings; and it was never seen that a vicious youth terminated in a contented, cheerful, old age, but perished out of countenance.

“ Ever keep the best qualified persons’ company, out of whom you will find advantage, and reserve some hours daily to examine yourself and fortune; for if you embark yourself in perpetual conversation or recreation, you will certainly shipwreck your mind and fortune. Remember the proverb, ‘Such as his company is, such is the man;’ and have glorious actions before your eyes, and think what will be your portion in heaven, as well as what you may desire upon earth. Manage your fortune prudently, and forget not that you must give God an account hereafter, and upon all occasions.”

The honour, influence, and power, of virtue and goodness, is admirably recorded in the book of Job, chap. xxix. when in his prosperity. “Oh! that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined

upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me: when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil. When I went out to the gate through the city; when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up: the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth, The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand: "My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouths wide, as for the latter rain.

If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners."



THE END

THE END.

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ÉDUCATION DES FEMMES.

LETTRE PREMIÈRE.

Vous savez depuis quel temps, Angélique, j'ai formé le projet de rassembler quelques idées sur l'éducation des femmes ; c'est un sujet grave et fécond que j'ai médité longuement par goût et par devoir, et sur lequel j'aimerais à jeter quelques aperçus nouveaux.

J'ai mesuré l'étendue d'une œuvre aussi vaste, et si je me décide à la tenter, c'est pour laisser à mes filles et à la vôtre, mon amie, les résultats d'une expérience déjà longue et chèrement acquise dans la carrière de l'enseignement, où si souvent vous m'avez dit, que la vocation m'avait sagement placée ; vous devez présumer que si je n'espérais trouver des choses neuves en cette matière, si je n'avais le dessein d'étudier quelques points qui n'ont été ni obser-

vés ni résolus encore, je ne me laisserais point aller à promener ma plume obscure sur cette question si grande et si belle, qui a fait la célébrité du peu de femmes qui l'ont traitée, il est vrai, avec un talent si remarquable.

Cependant s'il y a quelque témérité en moi, je ne pense pas qu'elle réside dans mon intention de présenter des réflexions nouvelles à ce propos. Je ne me sens téméraire et audacieuse que dans le désir que j'éprouve de leur donner une forme assez attrayante pour être comprise et recherchée. Jusqu'à ce jour vous l'avez vu, Angélique, l'éducation des femmes n'a principalement été envisagée qu'au point de vue borné et incomplet de la vie privée. C'est à l'influence de la famille, aux soins et à la vigilance

l'esprit des jeunes filles la même sollicitude qu'à la culture du cœur, tandis qu'il faudrait élever au même niveau ces deux puissances.

Une objection assez forte qu'on peut adresser encore aux meilleurs livres que nous possédions sur l'éducation des femmes, c'est qu'ils sont tous écrits pour les hautes classes et non pour les familles de la classe moyenne.

sance a puisé , j'en suis sûre , dans ces maximes de la morale la plus sévère , dans ces préceptes de la vertu la plus charitable , des principes de force et de bonté qui ont pu la guider heureusement au milieu du monde. Ces nuances délicates des convenances , ces précautions multipliées , cet entourage qui compte les gestes et garrotte les pas des élèves , ces lisières dorées qui tiennent leur intelligence captive , ne trouvez-vous pas , mon amie , qu'un tel cortège ne peut être qu'à l'usage des riches ?

elles ne peuvent porter au contrat qui doit les unir qu'une profession honnête et lucrative qui assure leur indépendance et leur honneur ?

Ainsi même pour l'éducation privée des femmes, c'est tout un ordre de considérations inconnues qu'il s'agit d'aborder aujourd'hui.

En ne faisant point de théories , en prenant les faits tels qu'ils

mens aussi soyeux qu'à celles des classes riches , exigent pour leur esprit une parure avenante. A tort ou à raison , l'instruction des femmes s'acquiert partout également sans discernement et sans crainte de l'avenir. Nul ne sait quelle sera la main puissante qui remettra l'harmonie au milieu de ce chaos. Il est certain qu'en parlant toujours au nom de la morale de nos pères , ce n'est plus le même langage qu'il faut faire entendre si l'on veut être écouté. Le grand art du passé dans l'éducation des femmes était de les tenir en charte privée, dans une situation préventive continuelle qui leur interdisait l'usage du mouvement et de la pensée. C'était partout précautions infinies et surveillance excessive. On songeait, avant toutes choses, à montrer aux aïeux le nom pur et sans tache de la famille : la femme n'avait d'autre fonction que celle d'épouse et de mère , et son intelligence, en tournant sans cesse sur elle-même, ne devait jamais dépasser le seuil du toit domestique. Aujourd'hui, c'est un acte qui s'est accompli providentiellement, les femmes par la nécessité ou par le sort sont tout près de rivaliser d'instruction avec les hommes. Je ne sais si nous devons nous en applaudir, car on trouve, je crois, plutôt les soucis que le bonheur sous les rameaux épais de l'arbre de la science. Quoi qu'il en soit, dans ce règne pacifique du travail et de l'industrie où les femmes partagent

la vie périlleuse et agitée des hommes , déjà depuis longtemps un grand nombre d'entre elles ont marché seules , libres et maîtresses de leur destinée , et pas une voix éclairée et amie n'est venue leur apprendre la sagesse et la force au milieu de la liberté ; non pas cette sagesse négative qui consiste à se séquestrer du monde , mais celle qui vous empêche de faillir à travers les dangers. Je me propose , comme vous voyez , mon amie , de répondre aux besoins présents de l'éducation privée des filles sans fortune , en m'occupant d'indiquer des ressources nouvelles à la morale et à l'instruction. Quant à l'éducation publique , c'est un sujet presque neuf sur lequel il n'existe que quelques excellentes pages de M^{me} Campan. Il y a cependant grandement à dire et à faire sur les maisons d'éducation ; j'essaierai de vous signaler les habitudes routinières des directrices et les préjugés enracinés des parents ; il sera urgent de vous dépeindre le personnel des professeurs , de vous montrer l'avenir médiocre et incertain des sous-maîtresses. Je vous dirai la faiblesse des méthodes et la frivolité des études. Je m'efforcerai surtout , en fait d'amélioration , de rester toujours dans les limites du possible ; c'est à la pratique qu'il me semble utile d'arriver tout d'abord. Vous n'ignorez pas combien d'innovations matérielles peuvent être tentées et introduites , combien de progrès et de

perfectionnements pourraient être obtenus par des principes plus favorables aux acquisitions intellectuelles. Vous ne doutez pas enfin que je ne sois capable de produire des idées avancées, comme on dit, sur l'éducation des femmes ; mais je devine en outre quelle est la pensée intime qui vous préoccupe et que vous gardez discrètement en réserve. N'est-il pas vrai que vous dites intérieurement, par devers vous, que tout cela n'est rien, et que vous m'attendez à l'article délicat de l'émancipation ? Je vous entends me demander : *Comment allez-vous faire pour vous tirer de là ?* Gardez-vous bien de croire que j'aie le dessein d'éluder cette haute question. Je vous ferai ma profession de foi sincère à ce sujet ; vous saurez sous quel aspect je considère l'élévation sociale des femmes, quel remède je voudrais à leurs maux et par quelle voie j'aimerais à les faire participer aux améliorations qu'elles ont le droit d'attendre, aussi bien que les hommes, du mouvement civilisateur.

Loin de moi ces théories brûlantes, à la logique radicale et fiévreuse, qui renversent tout sans pouvoir édifier. Ce n'est pas que je méprise cette voix d'égalité qui s'est fait entendre en ces derniers temps, que je rejette cette parole d'émancipation qui est venue retentir à nos oreilles comme un bruit inconnu qui effraie. Une clameur pareille n'est jamais produite par le caprice

isolé d'une volonté individuelle. Il y a dans une telle rumeur le symptôme évident d'un malaise et d'une position fausse dans l'existence actuelle des femmes, qui fait pressentir une réforme ; on ne peut prévoir comment et en quel temps ce changement pourra s'opérer, et, à tout prendre, je ne sais s'il est dans notre intérêt d'en désirer l'accomplissement.

Le génie du mal aura toujours une si large part aux événements du monde, qu'on se laisse aller à l'indifférence sur les transformations diverses qui viennent à s'effectuer dans les lois humaines.

Le jour où de nouveaux droits seront sanctionnés pour les femmes, sera peut-être l'indice que d'autres devoirs et de nouvelles charges s'appesantiront sur elles. Leur sort n'est-il pas le même que celui des peuples, et ne serait-ce pas à la condition de porter un fardeau plus lourd qu'on nous permettrait de monter les degrés de l'échelle sociale ?

Il résulte toutefois de tant d'idées étranges qui agitent sourdement les esprits, que les vieilles fondations de la morale ancienne deviennent vacillantes et peu sûres ; joignez à cela l'idolâtrie renaissante de la matière, et vous concevrez que la crise ne peut aller qu'en empirant au lieu de s'affaiblir.

Lorsque, par une force providentielle dont

nous ignorons la loi, le lien religieux qui unit une société à Dieu et la relie elle-même en un seul faisceau, vient à se rompre, n'essayez pas de le ressouder, et encore moins n' imaginez pas être assez habile pour en former un autre de toutes pièces. C'est une œuvre gigantesque qui demande au Créateur éternel quelques-unes de ces journées que nous nommons des siècles, et à laquelle il sacrifie des millions de travailleurs au bras formidable, à l'âme la plus dévouée et la plus belle.

Ce qu'il y a de plus prudent à faire dans ces temps de doute et d'affaissement moral, c'est de chercher dans sa raison intelligente et libre la force individuelle qui nous protège, c'est de se réfugier au for intérieur de la conscience et de la volonté, qui nous sont laissées pendant ces longues années d'intermittence, comme un abri sûr et consolant que la démoralisation ne peut atteindre. C'est alors que l'éducation est toute puissante, parce qu'elle agit isolément sur le cœur et sur l'esprit, lentement et à toute heure. Je dirai donc, pour aller droit au but, que les femmes, qui sont les plus exposées par leur nature douce et facile à recevoir l'empreinte funeste des espérances trompeuses ou des douleurs exagérées qui courent le monde, ont plus besoin que jamais de puiser en leur propre valeur le savoir et le discernement qui regardent et qui

jugent avant d'approuver et de choisir. C'est donc par une instruction étendue et solide qu'on peut leur inspirer la dignité de leur être et les sauver de la flatterie enivrante qui se plaît à les bercer dans l'ignorance pour les séduire et pour les perdre.

Plus je réfléchis à la grandeur du sujet qui m'occupe, plus je découvre le nombre infini de points accidentels qu'il embrasse ; je veux cependant vous donner un aperçu des matières que je me propose de traiter. Voici à peu près le contenu pêle-mêle des principaux chapitres :

Des méthodes.

MM. Lévi et Aimé Martin.

M^{mes} Necker, Campan, Rémusat, Guizot, etc.

De la maison de Saint-Denis.

Fénelon, Fourrier et Jacotot.

Emancipation des femmes.

De l'Université des femmes, écoles normales.

Education professionnelle et professions de femmes.

Des ouvrages manuels.

De l'éducation publique.

Des communautés religieuses de femmes.

De l'éducation particulière avec des maîtres et sous-maîtres.

De l'action sur la volonté.

Du sentiment religieux.

Poésie des enfants.

Des langues.

Des arts.

Des sciences.

Influence de la lecture.

De la beauté.

Des vocations, et de celle de l'enseignement en particulier.

Des goûts et des aptitudes.

Des Dames patronnesses.

De l'aristocratie des femmes.

Considérations sur le mariage.

Du célibat des femmes.

De la vie de famille.

De l'influence des femmes sur la société.

Il me serait facile d'agrandir encore l'étendue de cette nomenclature, quoiqu'en vérité il y ait là déjà ample matière à plus d'un volume; mais pour le moment je vous fais part de ce programme; je désire qu'il soit approuvé par vous. Dites-moi donc à présent, chère Angélique, quel est le souffle inspirateur qu'il faut que j'invoque pour écrire des pages qui soient dignes d'un si noble sujet; où donc vais-je trouver ce feu divin qui réchauffe et féconde un travail d'aussi longue haleine? J'espère en la pensée qui m'a suggéré cette entreprise. Je compte sur le sentiment profond de la tendresse la plus vive,

sur cet amour de mère, source délicieuse et intarissable où M^{me} de Sévigné puisait les paroles de parfum et de miel qui coulaient si éloquentes de sa bouche, au souvenir de sa fille adorée. Je m'estimerais heureuse si une seule mère, défiante et comprimée par la crainte de son impuissance, entreprenait à ma sollicitation et conduisait jusqu'à la fin l'instruction complète de ses enfants; je bénirais ma tentative si à ma voix émancipatrice une jeune fille pauvre et découragée par la réprobation qui déprime les intelligences en les classant, pouvait se relever indépendante et fière d'elle-même au moment de succomber sous le poids de sa faiblesse et de son inertie.

C'est sur vous aussi que je m'appuie, c'est votre jugement si clairvoyant et si libre qui me soutiendra dans ce voyage au long cours. Adieu donc, amie! comme un explorateur hardi et intrépide qui brûle de parcourir des régions inconnues, je pars gaiement; mon ciel est pur, l'espoir enfle mes voiles; je vous raconterai successivement les aventures de ma traversée lointaine.

LETTRE DEUXIÈME.

Vous avez reçu ma lettre, Angélique, et vous êtes assez bonne pour m'encourager et m'applaudir. Depuis ce temps, la tâche que j'ai entreprise ne me laisse plus en repos, elle est devenue pour moi une idée fixe qui me poursuit et m'aiguillonne.

Après cette épître d'introduction, je me suis demandé par où j'allais entrer en matière. Pénétrée de la gravité que je devais donner à ma parole, j'ai interrogé les lumières du passé; voulant marcher avec assurance, j'ai invoqué l'expérience des traditions et de la sagesse; mais, vous le savez, mon amie, la vérité est une beauté sauvage qui s'enfuit comme une ombre dès qu'on commence à l'entrevoir; je n'ai donc pas la prétention de vous dire que j'ai rencontré la base unique et absolue sur laquelle doit reposer aujourd'hui l'éducation des femmes. Ce-

pendant vous pourrez voir par ce qui va suivre que je me suis appliquée à la chercher. Toutefois, je n'ai pas jugé qu'il fût utile de remonter à l'origine du sentiment et de la conscience. J'ai craint de m'engager dans les ténèbres mystérieuses des abstractions philosophiques : on est trop sujet à s'égarer en s'évertuant à resserrer dans une définition ces questions nébuleuses qui renferment l'infini et l'incompréhensible. Mais rassurez-vous : si je crois à notre extrême faiblesse, j'ai une foi ardente en la toute-puissance de Dieu ; si pour moi l'homme n'est qu'un voyageur aveugle qui chemine en tâtonnant, je n'oublie pas que la Providence le conduit par la main, et que sa voix pénétrante et douce le sauve du péril, toutes les fois qu'il prête l'oreille à ses inspirations.

Jusqu'à ce jour on a vu l'éducation des femmes s'appuyer tour-à-tour sur la philosophie, sur l'obéissance aux lois civiles, sur une morale indépendante des religions, ou sur la religion elle-même. Puis, quelques systèmes ont essayé de conduire au bonheur et à la perfection par les succès du monde et les joies intimes de la famille ou par l'abnégation et le sacrifice ; d'autres enfin espèrent à cette heure les rencontrer dans l'industrie.

Mais peut-on croire que les doctrines philosophiques et la science sociale soient bien ha-

biles à connaître et à conduire les destinées morales des peuples, lorsqu'on voit leurs codes n'avoir de valeur qu'à la condition d'être dictés par les faits accomplis qui se transforment sans cesse. Aussi je ne m'enquiers point du principe infallible qui doit servir de véhicule à la volonté, je suis certaine que l'homme étant né pour obéir, doit être fait pour vouloir; soit qu'il s'agite dans sa force ou s'endorme dans son indolence, il peut toujours maîtriser les attractions qui font battre son cœur, aussi bien que les répulsions qui l'arrêtent.

Oh ! s'il nous était donné de pénétrer les lois éternelles qui président aux aspirations de l'âme, comme nous connaissons les instincts immuables qui veillent à la conservation matérielle de notre être, la morale serait universelle et invariable ; au lieu d'avoir cette mobilité qui chagrinait l'âme si chrétienne de Pascal, elle deviendrait facile à pratiquer pour tous, et l'éducation, qui tant de fois voit chanceler la base sur laquelle on s'efforce de l'appuyer, serait une science positive dont la culture produirait partout des fruits sains et savoureux.

Vain désir que celui-là ! à quoi sert d'exprimer des vœux inutiles, et pourquoi s'attrister de cette inévitable différence ? Quelle erreur de soupirer ainsi après une introuvable unité ! Fille des mœurs et des usages, la morale se diversifie

suivant les climats ; elle change selon les temps et les lieux, reçoit son caractère des lois et de la religion prescrite, modifie ses préceptes suivant les besoins et les idées de chaque société et de chaque nation.

Aussi bien les peuples primitifs n'ont point attendu qu'une formule théorique vînt leur enseigner les leçons qu'il fallait donner à l'enfance ; avec la première mère a commencé l'éducation de famille et l'éducation sociale.

Interrogez, à l'origine des temps, l'intelligence humaine essayant à deviner l'énigme de nos devoirs sur cette terre : éclairée par la raison et guidée par la conscience, elle sait déjà faire pratiquer la justice et modérer la fougue des passions ; éprise des merveilles de la création et de la grandeur divine, elle élève l'esprit et le cœur par des essais de l'art, en faisant imiter les œuvres de la nature et les perfections de Dieu. On voit le vieillard expérimenté recommander à la jeunesse la prudence et l'oubli de soi, le poète admiré se fait écouter avec ivresse en répétant l'hymne sainte qui apprend à remercier le Ciel d'un bienfait ; puis on entend, plus loin, des chants plaintifs qui déplorent et jugent le crime, en dirigeant les généreuses pensées de l'homme sur la trace des nobles actions.

Mais parmi ces concerts des populations qui

passent et disparaissent, et qui du berceau à la tombe modulent les mêmes accords, entendez une voix qui domine toutes les autres, un vœu qui revient sans cesse et toujours de plus en plus pressant. D'où vient cette imposante prière qui se prolonge de siècle en siècle plus retentissante que le bruit de l'océan soulevé par les tempêtes? Pourquoi ces nuages d'encens qui obscurcissent l'azur des hémisphères? Si vous voulez connaître la cause d'une clameur si grande, on vous répondra : C'est le bonheur ; voilà ce que l'âme demande constamment à celui qui a mis en elle la pensée de cet insatiable désir.

Les traditions les plus lointaines nous montrent l'homme poursuivant la félicité sur terre, à travers toutes les conceptions que peut enfanter son imagination féconde. L'idée du bonheur est innée en nous ; c'est une illusion, une chimère que chacun perçoit à sa guise. La sagesse antique et moderne a beau répéter que le principe du mal et l'imperfection de notre nature s'opposent à sa réalisation complète ici-bas, les individus comme les masses le poursuivent sous une forme ou sous une autre, de toute la force de leurs facultés ; et le rêve le plus pur du sentiment religieux lui-même, sa plus chère espérance, est encore le bonheur qu'il éternise dans la vie future. Faut-il s'étonner que la morale et

l'éducation aient essayé de placer leurs fondements sur cette énergique expression du *moi* humain? Il semblait difficile de trouver un plus puissant levier pour soulever le monde.

Quoi ! le bonheur, cette espérance vague, cette satisfaction universelle qui ne peut exister, serait le principe fondamental de l'éducation ? Ce serait pour les entourer de bonheur, qu'on élèverait les hommes ! Non ! si le bonheur était sur terre il devrait répondre à tout, se trouver dans toute chose, et chacun pourrait se désaltérer sans lassitude et sans obstacles à sa source délicieuse. Mais bien loin de là, l'égoïsme impie, l'envie qui déchire, les soupirs étouffés, les déceptions et l'attente vaine, voilà ce qu'on rencontre dans le monde : faibles et chancelants, toujours destinés à combattre, les hommes doivent être préparés au contraire pour la lutte et la conquête. Il faut que l'enfance, comme l'âge mûr, s'aguerrisse contre cet avenir, et triomphe sans relâche des privations et du malheur ; que l'une apprenne à vaincre sa funeste mobilité, et que l'autre se raffermisse sans cesse contre la cruelle pensée du désespoir.

L'éducation doit accoutumer la jeunesse à supporter la gêne et les dégoûts dont la vie abonde, l'endurcir contre la douleur, la rendre compatissante, et lui montrer la route des succès et de la gloire dans la patience et le travail.

Mais la religion n'est-elle pas l'appui sûr et inébranlable que l'éducation doit désirer et choisir ? Ici, ma chère Angélique, j'éprouve le besoin de recueillir un peu mes idées avant de vous dévoiler mes convictions intimes, et de confier timidement à votre amitié les pensées qui viennent m'assaillir en foule en abordant un sujet si grave et si profond.

Ne trouvez-vous pas, mon amie, qu'il serait nécessaire de diviser cette dernière question en deux parties ; ne faudrait-il pas faire une distinction entre les religions et le sentiment religieux ?

Si l'on me demande : L'éducation peut-elle trouver une base inaltérable dans le sentiment religieux, dans ce principe vital, pour ainsi dire, qui brille au cœur aussitôt que l'idée ? les marques presque divines qu'il a imprimées aux œuvres de l'homme sur la terre sauront répondre pour moi.

Oh ! que je plains cette aride philosophie, qui s'est efforcée de resserrer les puissances de l'âme, dans la sphère étroite de la raison isolée ; tandis que les plus nobles facultés réclament l'immensité et recherchent l'infini !

Aussi, voyez comme on dédaigne aujourd'hui les leçons décevantes des philosophes, regardez si l'enfant est privé de réponse quand il demande qui fait gronder la foudre, pousser l'herbe et briller le soleil ! Quoi ! vous voudriez éteindre

ce sentiment si merveilleux qui fait les poètes au suave langage, les législateurs inspirés chargés de traduire le verbe éternel de Dieu, ainsi que l'on voit ces germes légers, ces molécules voyageuses, poussés de loin par les vents rapides, s'arrêter sur les hautes cimes qui doivent les recueillir et les fertiliser ?

Oui, l'éducation doit puiser, à la source du sentiment religieux, la volonté qui fait le génie, et l'amour qui rend juste et bon.

Devant la tombe qui s'entr'ouvre ou le choc inattendu qui brise cruellement l'amitié, quand la raison commande la patience ou la distraction qui mènent à l'oubli, c'est lui seul qui sait consoler.

Oh ! oui, mon amie, il faut écouter cette voix intérieure, et chérir cette invisible chaîne, qui relie l'homme à Dieu ; il faut que l'éducation choisisse cette roche du rivage pour édifier le phare lumineux qui conduit au port les passagers qui s'égarent ou les naufragés qui ont perdu l'espoir. Oui, le sentiment religieux est la base la plus large et la plus forte que puisse prendre l'éducation, parce que c'est un cri de la conscience libre et intelligente, qui parle éternellement le même langage au cœur de tous les hommes.

Mais au milieu des religions sociales, sujettes aux vicissitudes des siècles et que la Providence transforme et modifie dans sa toute-puissance, la

religion peut-elle être la base universelle, exclusive de l'éducation ? Je pense que non.

En effet, l'éducation existe indépendamment des religions particulières qui unissent les hommes entre eux ; l'éducation est un bien dont jouissent les sceptiques et les croyants, ceux qui errent comme ceux qui protestent.

Dans tous les siècles et dans tous les pays, je ne connais que trois principes qui doivent servir de règle universelle aux actions humaines et de bases fondamentales à l'éducation : c'est le sentiment de l'infini, la conscience et la raison.

A la raison appartient l'examen, la liberté intérieure et tout ce qui est du domaine libre de l'intelligence ; toutefois la soumission extérieure aux conventions existantes est un devoir que la société réclame. C'est ce qui constitue, avec le sentiment religieux, trois vertus bien distinctes qui n'ont rien d'aveugle.

Par le sentiment de l'infini, les élans sublimes du cœur vont se raviver au sein de l'Éternel, et redescendent comme une douce rosée pour verser des pleurs sur les souffrances de l'humanité.

Par la raison, on développe la liberté intellectuelle, et par respect pour la société, on apprend à se soumettre aux obligations qu'elle impose.

Cultiver le sentiment religieux doit être la

première vertu de l'éducation ; obéir à sa raison et à sa conscience coûte que coûte, voilà la seconde.

Se conformer aux usages, quand ils sont des conventions sacrées dans un pays , dans une famille , telle est la troisième, qui n'est pas la moins méritante.

Ainsi, en d'autres termes, l'éducation prend son origine dans la foi religieuse et dans l'exercice de l'intelligence même indépendante et sans bornes, guidée par la conscience et la raison, et dans les habitudes d'une soumission constante, aux fictions nécessaires de la société, quel que soit le jugement que la raison prononce.

Je ne sais, mon amie, si après avoir applaudi aux aperçus généraux que j'avais jetés d'abord, vous aimerez ce travail où je pénètre plus avant dans ces vastes parages.

Je ne sais si vous trouverez justes les lois que j'indique , et si elles seront sanctionnées par vous.

Cependant, relisez-les bien ; regardez attentivement le monde dans ses réalités actuelles , et sa structure dans ce qu'elle a d'indestructible et d'invariable , et vous verrez peut-être qu'en dehors des fermes appuis de ces principes anti-ques , sur lesquels j'ai longuement médité, nous ne pouvons montrer à nos enfants qu'une route mouvante et sans issue. Ce n'est pas entre deux

mères que l'amour maternel doit placer ses enseignements, nous n'avons pas besoin de nous encourager mutuellement à la tendresse pour nos filles : après les devoirs si impérieux de ma profession, les miennes remplissent toute ma pensée et occupent tous mes loisirs; et vous, qui avez déjà consacré aux soins de votre Laure chérie, de longues et pénibles veilles, et qui, sous l'inspiration de sa première enfance, avez déposé, dans un livre destiné au jeune âge, les essais remarquables de votre début dans la carrière que vous poursuivez depuis avec succès; sur tout ce qui vous reste à faire, essayez, examinez si vous ne trouverez pas à vous étayer plus fortement encore sur les fondations que je m'efforce d'exhausser. Pour moi, mon amie, je vous le dis comme à toutes les mères, j'ai mûrement réfléchi sur les dogmes salutaires que j'invoque; je les pratique par devoir sur la grande famille que la Providence confie chaque jour à mes soins; mais l'étude du cœur et la science du monde m'ont appris à les aimer; et dans toute la sincérité de ma parole, après avoir ardemment cherché s'il en existait de meilleurs, je les proclame comme les plus sages et les plus féconds.

Il me resterait donc, pour clore cette épître, à vous parler de l'industrie dans ses rapports avec l'éducation des femmes. Il est

inutile, je pense, de faire observer que l'industrie, qui n'est qu'une application de l'intelligence, a ouvert, par le travail, des routes nouvelles à ses efforts et à son activité. Je chercherai l'idéalité, les chances de bonheur que peut trouver notre époque dans cet attrait du luxe et de la richesse qui forme son espérance et sa foi; j'essaierai de montrer ce que les femmes peuvent acquérir en moralité, en dignité et en intelligence dans ces progrès si rapides de la matière.

Déjà vous avez entendu prononcer la qualification récente d'éducation, ou plutôt d'instruction professionnelle, car il me semble qu'elle doit appartenir à la sphère étendue que l'instruction embrasse; je me trouve forcément conduit à traiter cette importante question dans ma prochaine lettre.

Je prendrai plaisir à vous dépeindre l'attrait et la diversité des professions des femmes et les avantages réels qui résulteraient pour elles d'un enseignement théorique, universel, puisé et démontré dans la pratique elle-même; je ferai ressortir les améliorations qui en découleraient pour leur position sociale.

En faisant concorder mes prévisions avec les bases fondamentales que j'ai posées *à priori*, je montrerai comment la moralité sur laquelle je m'appuie peut seule instituer et établir avec

certitude et solidité une fondation si importante; comment elle peut recueillir les vocations et fortifier le cœur et l'esprit de son autorité fertilisante.

Adieu, chère amie, à une autre fois, et n'oubliez pas de me redire au plus vite votre impression première quand ma pensée vous arrivera.



LETTRE TROISIÈME.

Ma bien chère amie, j'envie votre séjour calme et silencieux loin du tumulte de Paris et de ses exigences qui rendent la pensée si distraite et gaspillent tant d'heures. Vous avez plus de repos d'esprit que moi, pour conduire à bien l'œuvre qui vous occupe. Votre livre s'achève, vous n'avez plus qu'à le revoir, dites-vous; le mien à peine commence. Vous êtes bien moins restreinte et plus favorisée; vous venez de vivre dans un monde d'harmonie et d'espérance, vous avez semé partout sur vos pas des fleurs odorantes, et quand l'hiver fait déjà ressentir son souffle glacé autour de nous, il ne tient qu'à vous, heureux poète, de respirer encore l'air doux et embaumé qu'elles exhalent en vos retraites mystérieuses.

Tandis que moi, vous le croirez sans peine, les rives que je parcours sont plus arides et plus sévères; quoique tracée d'avance, ma route n'est

pas sans entraves; je redoute parfois que ma gravité ne provoque la monotonie et la tristesse; si j'échappe à l'entraînement de l'enthousiasme et des rêves, je ne voudrais cependant pas m'abandonner au rapide courant des réflexions vulgaires, aujourd'hui surtout que j'ai le dessein d'examiner avec vous cette question nouvelle des professions spéciales.

Vous vous rappelez ce que je vous disais à ce propos dans ma dernière lettre; eh bien! mon amie, je ne sais comment il se fait que je traite fortuitement ce sujet dans celle-ci, juste au moment où il préoccupe deux hommes haut placés dans les fonctions administratives ¹. Vous qui aimez tant à vous nourrir des conceptions qui ont un caractère marquant de sociabilité, qui êtes si attentive à observer parmi les projets qui s'élaborent ceux qui se distinguent par la grandeur et la fécondité, vous avez dû suivre, avec un intérêt égal au mien, la controverse qui vient de s'élever sur les probabilités d'une institution nationale destinée à l'enseignement des professions de jeunes gens.

L'opportunité d'une telle fondation n'est plus mise en doute par personne; de tous côtés la science économique avec son esprit organisateur et positif, le génie de l'époque actif et délibéré

¹ MM. Michel Chevalier et Saint-Marc-Girardin.

réclament au nom de la puissance industrielle l'université des travailleurs. Convaincu des améliorations importantes qui doivent résulter de l'accroissement des forces productives, on demande avec instance un atelier modèle pour les apprentissages, une vaste école ouverte à tous les états.

Toutefois, si l'on admet la nécessité de détourner la majeure partie de la jeunesse du charme des belles-lettres, si l'on s'accorde à regarder les humanités grecques et latines comme un bagage inutile dans la plupart des carrières qu'elle parcourt, je revendiquerai au même titre une réforme équivalente à l'égard des jeunes filles.

Que fait-on, en effet, pour cette foule de jeunes personnes qui, convenablement pourvues dans le présent, ont à redouter tant de privations de l'avenir ? A quoi sert de les livrer si longtemps aux connaissances médiocres et vaniteuses qui consomment sans résultat les plus belles années de leur existence ? à quoi bon ces ébauches d'arts qu'on délaisse, ces nomenclatures écourtées de géographie et d'histoire, ces noms barbares de tant de races dynastiques ?

Est-ce une éducation raisonnée que celle qui laisse écouler inutilement la sève si pure et si précoce de l'enfance ? Il y a bien longtemps que je suis condamnée à gémir plus souvent que toute

autre en voyant les belles qualités de l'intelligence se paralyser dans le vide des théories. Des moyens analogues, employés pour l'éducation des femmes, présentent des écueils et des dangers pareils à ceux qu'on signale pour les facultés intellectuelles des hommes.

On dirait que la science enseignante se plaît à jeter partout un voile obscur pour rendre indispensable le cortège dispendieux des explicateurs, et qu'elle a pris à tâche d'effrayer l'esprit et la raison native des enfants, pour les rendre incapables à tout jamais de se mouvoir sans leur assistance.

L'éducation générale en France, qui n'est pas même d'accord sur le livre moral, unique et permanent qu'elle doit placer entre les mains de l'adolescence, s'en va, jetant à tous des notions de belles-lettres et de beaux-arts, comme si elle voulait provoquer et pousser toutes les vocations aux professions littéraires et poétiques.

Si la route des jeunes gens se prolonge lentement et outre mesure, celle des jeunes filles dépense les deux plus beaux lustres de leur vie à répéter péniblement des verbes irréguliers et défectifs; la grammaire, voilà le premier livre qu'on place sous les yeux si distraits et si mobiles d'une enfant; c'est une énigme perpétuelle, un recueil hiéroglyphique sans dessin et sans couleur qu'on offre à son esprit, qui jusqu'alors n'a vécu que

par les sens, et n'a bien compris que les images. Si l'on voulait donner une profession pédagogique à une élève, c'est à peine s'il faudrait lui imposer ce code classique des lois du langage.

La déclamation, l'éloquence, l'art du littérateur, du poète lui-même ne demandent qu'un modèle, et les exercices qu'il renferme sont indépendants de la syntaxe et de l'analyse grammaticale, qui ne viennent qu'après. *Rachel* a compris Racine avant l'orthographe; peut-être ne la saura-t-elle jamais, si on ne la lui enseigne qu'avec *Betellier* ou *Chapsal*.

Dans les autres carrières, j'indiquerai comme très-utile le livre le plus en rapport avec chaque profession : il faudrait prendre la vie ou les mémoires d'un grand artiste, d'un inventeur industriel célèbre dans sa spécialité; ce serait un manuel excellent pour tout élève en industrie; l'enseignement professionnel devrait le procurer à tous les états et le créer pour ceux auxquels il manque.

Un tel livre, riche de faits traditionnels, chaleureusement écrit dans un but général et pratique, servirait pour apprendre la lecture et l'orthographe à l'élève; elle y trouverait assez de géographie, d'histoire et de littérature pour y rapporter ce qui lui serait utile ou ce qu'il lui plairait d'en chercher ailleurs; elle aimerait à lire ce qu'on y dit à tout propos de l'état qu'elle pré-

fère, et se proposerait d'imiter le maître illustre qui raconte sa vie et ses travaux, l'ouvrière ou l'artiste renommée dont on exalte la gloire.

Mais avant de passer à l'application, je crains de ne pas avoir assez insisté sur l'indispensable nécessité de cette organisation nouvelle d'enseignement qui peut devenir une ancre de salut dans le dénuement et la détresse.

Vous souvenez-vous, mon amie, de l'étonnante prophétie du philosophe genevois : « Je veux absolument qu'Émile apprenne un métier, parce que nous approchons de l'état de crise et du siècle des révolutions. » Le siècle est en effet venu, et il a infligé à tous la sévère obligation du travail. Pauvre Jean-Jacques ! lui qui demandait pour les femmes tant d'activité, qui les voulait si occupées, si attentives aux travaux du ménage ; lui qui ne nous aimait ni frivoles, ni insoucieuses, s'il avait vu son élève privilégié par la richesse et la naissance réduit sous le nouveau régime au revenu modique de son état, tourmenté par le sort et se prenant corps à corps avec la concurrence : il eût regretté, j'en suis sûre, de n'avoir donné à Sophie, la compagne de son Émile, que les qualités industrieuses d'une ménagère, qui demandent l'espace et l'aisance pour s'exercer, au lieu d'une profession productive qui aurait diminué leur anxiété en doublant les ressources du ménage.

La réaction s'est opérée; après la crise, l'état de paix presque générale commence à causer la plénitude et produit l'accroissement démesuré des populations que l'incurie agglomère toutes sur les mêmes points; et l'on voit nos désirs et nos besoins se multiplier en raison inverse de nos demeures et de nos fortunes qui se morcellent et se rétrécissent. Dans cet état de choses, l'avènement accéléré de l'industrie conduisant ses cohortes et leurs chefs à la conquête du monde matériel, exige que l'éducation prévoyante élargisse son influence et multiplie ses ressorts pour contenir et régulariser l'élan nouveau des masses agissantes.

Je ne crois pas qu'elle puisse nous laisser en dehors d'une sollicitude si impérieuse.

Considérez notre position difficile au milieu des tentations du luxe et de l'opulence, lorsque de toutes parts les mots de progrès et de bonheur, de satisfactions promises à tous les vœux, font résonner à nos oreilles leurs promesses fallacieuses. Cherchez quelle est la prévision réellement efficace qui nous protège et préside à nos destinées futures! Le travail même, qui devrait être une sauve-garde pour les femmes qui ont des états, est souvent pour elles une occasion de faiblesse ou de faute.

Je ne sais quel dégoût et quel vertige leur font dédaigner follement ce qu'il y a de beau et d'ho-

norable dans les professions qu'elles remplissent. On dirait qu'elles ignorent la grâce attrayante, le mérite réel des ouvrages délicats qu'on se plaît à voir naître sous leurs doigts industriels ; on déplore cette inconstance et cette aveugle impétuosité qui compromettent si souvent leur avenir en leur faisant interrompre ou abandonner une condition honnête et assurée pour courir après l'éclat passager d'une vie oisive qui les corrompt et les fait faillir.

Le prestige de la parure et les délicates mollesses des habitudes les plus recherchées ne sont pas, chez les femmes sans fortune, la seule cause qui concourt à porter le trouble en elles-mêmes, et l'immoralité au sein de l'ordre social.

En attachant une idée de supériorité à l'éducation littéraire, en faisant plus d'estime du style correct et de la parole érudite que de la pensée, on a propagé la croyance à l'inégalité intellectuelle des classes inférieures, sans songer que c'était donner un stimulant à l'orgueil, qui cherche toujours à s'élever.

Si au lieu de flétrir de la sorte les classes ouvrières par l'inégalité intellectuelle des rangs, on eût proclamé un égal respect, une même considération pour tous les genres de travaux nécessaires à l'existence de la société ; si on eût reconnu l'égalité possible des professions, si distincte de l'égalité chimérique des fortunes, des

rangs et des costumes ; si l'on eût inauguré l'égalité inoffensive de l'intelligence , la seule que Dieu ait accordée à tous ; qui pourrait calculer les effets salutaires d'une pensée aussi sage pour le perfectionnement des travaux humains, pour le bonheur des individus et pour le repos des sociétés ? Ne voit-on pas que chacun alors, apprenant à estimer son état, aspirerait bien moins à ces déplacements funestes d'une ambition turbulente ?

Cependant je crois vous l'avoir dit, Angélique ; je puis gémir sur la dégénération et l'anarchie des idées morales, mais je ne me sens aucune mission pour crier anathème aux erreurs du siècle, ni pour exciter son engouement. Il faut accepter les faits existants, puisque les nations en délire répètent, Dieu le veut ; puisque, entraînée par une force irrésistible, la vie humaine semble désormais s'écouler dans la tourmente des affaires et de l'activité productrice, avec une vitesse égale au mouvement précipité des astres ; qu'il en soit ainsi ! néanmoins, nous ne devons pas enlaidir ni voir sous des couleurs éclatantes les objets que la réalité vient toujours assombrir.

Je ne crois pas m'être méprise en vous disant que le grand siècle du progrès dont nous sommes si fières, a son côté défavorable pour les femmes. Cette terre promise d'égalité fictive après laquelle quelques-unes soupirent, n'arrivera que trop

tôt peut-être pour leur tranquille sécurité d'autrefois. Loin de leur offrir des oasis enchanteuses et des fêtes incessantes, il faut qu'elles sachent bien que l'avenir leur ouvre une arène remplie d'occupations plus attachantes, et leur prépare des devoirs plus rigoureux que jamais.

Dans cette attente d'égalité ou plutôt d'indépendance vertueuse réservée à un grand nombre d'entre elles, et qui se présente comme une nécessité louable qui les contraint à pourvoir elles-mêmes à leur avenir, je regarde l'éducation professionnelle comme la providence des femmes, la véritable école de la sagesse et du bonheur.

Une semblable institution où l'on pourvoirait avec largesse au savoir indispensable à toutes les professions, une communauté industrielle de cette nature, où l'on élèverait l'intelligence et la raison des jeunes filles en leur donnant la conscience d'une œuvre importante à remplir, où l'on habituerait les élèves à la pratique des vertus sociales par le respect et l'égalité des professions, serait une pensée libérale et pieuse, vraiment digne d'un souverain patronage.

Et qu'on se garde bien de dire qu'il n'y a rien qui puisse élever l'âme dans les travaux industriels, rien qui l'avertisse de son importance et de sa dignité, faute d'une nouvelle méthode que je vous exposerai plus tard ; l'ouvrière et l'artiste médiocres se sont en effet trouvées réduites à un

rôle passif et mécanique, mais il est facile de les élever des degrés inférieurs qu'occupe le métier jusqu'aux degrés supérieurs qui appartiennent à l'art.

Montrez comment une ouvrière, en cherchant le *pourquoi*, la sagesse de chaque partie de ses ouvrages, peut parvenir à admirer l'intelligence humaine dans l'œuvre matérielle qui se façonne entre ses mains. Alors chacun de ses ouvrages, bien compris, soumis au calcul, devenu le résultat d'une longue réflexion, se présentera devant elle comme un miroir où se réfléchira la beauté de l'âme humaine avec sa puissance et sa perfection, tout aussi bien que dans un ouvrage de littérature, de morale ou de philosophie.

Je vous le dirai sans crainte : de même que pour celui qui sait l'y chercher et l'y contempler, Dieu apparaît aussi bien dans la petite plante de la prairie, que dans le développement incommensurable des cieux ; de même l'esprit humain peut se contempler dans l'œuvre intelligente d'un ouvrier habile, comme dans l'ordonnance merveilleuse d'une éclatante épopée.

L'artisan qui connaît son but et qui l'atteint par un ouvrage perfectionné dans toutes les parties qui concourent à l'unité, est plus artiste que l'ouvrier en paroles, le littérateur expert, qui ne comprend pas la moralité, la poésie et l'identité possible des intelligences dans l'universalité des aptitudes et des travaux.

Quoi qu'en ait dit le membre de l'université littéraire, chaque élève de l'enseignement professionnel sentira toute la dignité de son être dans l'étude de l'état qu'elle aura choisi, et cette culture épurera par là même ses instincts moraux si précieux à développer. Avertie dès-lors de la valeur et de la beauté de son intelligence, elle se plaira dans la place où la Providence l'appelle, parce qu'elle y trouvera la conscience de son égalité et les charmes d'une poésie qui lui sera propre et personnelle.

« La poésie révélée à toutes les intelligences, » dit une de nos femmes illustres, « serait un sens » de plus que tous les hommes peut-être sont » plus ou moins capables d'acquérir, et qui rendrait toutes les existences plus étendues, plus nobles et plus heureuses. »

Cette pensée ne vous rappelle-t-elle pas, mon amie, un type charmant de jeune fille chaste et naïve, appartenant à la classe ouvrière, Geneviève, l'artisan, la fleuriste, dont les jours semblaient devoir s'écouler si calmes et si purs, lorsqu'André, cet oisif lettré, ce rêveur sans énergie, est venu la faire sortir de la réalité pour l'entraîner dans un tourbillon scientifique et l'enlever si cruellement à sa vocation bienheureuse?

Pourquoi l'auteur d'un livre si poétique n'a-t-il pas compris la moralité qui pouvait en jaillir?

Je ne sais encore quelle sera la vocation de mes filles ; mais, en attendant qu'elles possèdent toute la force de leur volonté, je veux fermement pour elles, et ma raison me dit qu'il faut les préparer à un état. Qu'elles soient destinées aux arts, à l'industrie, aux sciences, au commerce ou à l'enseignement, l'éducation professionnelle libre et privée qu'elles commencent à recevoir s'exerce déjà dans la vue noble d'un métier. Point de danger, point d'inconvénient pour l'éducation, même la plus brillante, à faire acquérir de très-bonne heure toute la promptitude, toute l'assurance qu'exige la pratique d'une profession nécessaire.

S'occupent-elles de musique, de dessin, d'écriture, d'arts mécaniques ou d'ouvrages manuels de toutes sortes, pour l'une ou l'autre de ces études qu'elles affectionnent et dans lesquelles on les voit persister ; il faut, à tout prix, qu'elles s'accoutument à ne la considérer ni comme un jeu, ni comme un amusement. La prudence le veut ainsi ; on ne redoute pas de cette manière les vocations manquées qui abandonnent les élèves, au quart de leur chemin, dans le dénuelement d'une tentative infructueuse.

Cependant, rien n'empêche que du métier nous arrivions à l'art, puisque c'est par lui que tout art commence, puisque tout enseignement ne peut prétendre qu'à l'initiation du métier ;

l'art et le talent viennent après , c'est l'intelligence émancipée qui seule peut rendre un artiste vraiment digne de ce nom.

Toute profession a son art et sa poésie, sa science et sa littérature; tout état possède son utilité et sa gloire.

Si notre époque abonde en jeunes prodiges de savoir et d'habileté, ce n'est pas parce que les intelligences du xix^e siècle sont supérieures à celles qui l'ont précédé, c'est parce qu'on commence à moins douter de la compréhension et de la force qui résident en toute intelligence d'enfant; c'est qu'on s'y prend presque aussi vite pour leur apprendre la langue de la musique, du dessin et des autres arts, que pour leur inculquer la langue maternelle. D'après ces idées, songez bien que ma fille, à quinze ans, doit être en état de vivre honorablement du fruit de son travail; il faut qu'elle sache assez bien le métier de sa profession pour se suffire à elle-même. C'est donc à la valeur intrinsèque du métier que l'art doit s'appliquer d'abord; de même, le métier doit immédiatement se proposer d'atteindre les hauteurs de l'art : il faut posséder à cet âge la souplesse de la mémoire exercée, la dextérité du faire et de la pratique entière des arts, de manière à se jouer déjà de tous les genres et à badinier avec les difficultés; il faut avoir la conscience de sa valeur, et la foi dans sa propre

volonté; être élevée à comprendre l'unité du métier et de l'art, et posséder le sentiment de l'infini que renferme chaque profession qu'on embrasse.

Si c'est la musique dont elle a fait choix, à cet âge elle doit être assez avancée et assez sûre d'elle-même dans la lecture ou l'agilité des doigts, dans tout le mécanisme de l'art, pour ne me laisser aucun regret, si par hasard un obstacle imprévu ou le sommeil de sa volonté venait à suspendre les progrès continus qui mènent à l'art, puisque, à tout prendre, il lui resterait le métier.

Au même âge dans la peinture toute élève laborieuse qui commence assez tôt doit avoir la prestesse de la touche et l'agrément du coloris, doit pouvoir copier tous les genres avec une célérité et une justesse assez remarquable, pour trouver une existence convenable dans l'état de copiste; et notez bien que pour arriver aux œuvres d'imagination ou à l'imitation de la nature, cette voie est la plus sûre et la plus rationnelle; c'est celle qui conduit le plus vite à ces degrés de l'art où sont assises mesdames Dehérain-Mirbel, Haudebourt et Gérard. Mais qu'on ne craigne pas surtout qu'une telle marche ne produise que d'ignorans praticiens, puisqu'il faut au contraire demander à sa profession toute l'érudition qu'elle comporte, et acquérir pour son art toutes les connaissances qui s'y ratta-

chent. Il en serait de même de l'enseignement, de l'industrie ou du commerce.

Vous voyez, mon amie, par ce qui précède, que l'éducation doit puiser une vie nouvelle dans les professions, dans la destinée active et intelligente des femmes qui les feraient marcher auprès de l'homme, le seconder et le suivre quand il s'élève, au lieu de rester inertes et passives à ses côtés, comme la plante parasite qu'on voit fleurir aux dépens du chêne vigoureux qui l'abrite.

C'est l'influence prodigieuse d'une vocation décidée, d'une inclination qui porte toute la pensée vers un état qu'on vénère et qu'on professe comme un culte, qui doit évidemment faire progresser la femme et l'ennoblir encore ; car nul ne peut démontrer l'infériorité de notre intelligence, nul ne peut affirmer que, dans toutes les professions qui sont compatibles avec notre organisation physique, nous ne puissions exceller aussi bien que celui qui se trouve constitué notre supérieur et notre maître.

Si l'on m'objecte l'inutilité de faire entrer les professions dans l'éducation des femmes, si l'on trouve que les études spéciales et les apprentissages y pourvoient chaque jour, sous la libre direction des familles ; je répondrai qu'il est une foule de professions, celles surtout qui sont les plus lucratives et les plus séduisantes, qui se déterminent au hasard ; je dirai qu'il est des choix

funestes faits sans raison et sans prévoyance, des influences pernicieuses et des maîtrises démoralisantes; les professions s'acquièrent, il est vrai, mais les préjugés, la routine qui intimident les femmes et prodiguent leur temps, ne laissent poindre parmi elles que de rares célébrités.

L'université professionnelle des femmes devra suppléer à cette insuffisance, et présentera de plus l'enseignement de la morale saine et fertile, l'alimentation spirituelle appliquée au travail dans toutes ses phases et dans toutes ses créations.

Je n'ignore pas qu'une telle institution ne saurait s'improviser en un jour, mais au moins qu'on ne rejette pas son urgence extrême, ni les idées qui lui viennent en aide; le moyen-âge abritait les sœurs des aînées de famille contre l'isolement et l'ennui; il savait calmer les âmes délaissées en donnant une pensée divine, un époux céleste à tous les cœurs brisés; notre époque, qui ne sait ni consoler les esprits chagrins, ni fixer les êtres mobiles, ferait donc progresser encore la morale et la dignité humaine en enseignant le respect et l'amour pour la condition où Dieu nous a placées, et en offrant aux jeunes filles sans fortune un avenir certain par le don généreux de professions qui pourrait les élever en outre à la glorieuse dotation du talent.

Je termine là, mon amie, cette longue lettre dans laquelle vous trouverez, j'espère, quelques

principes de vie et de force nouvelles pour l'éducation privée et publique des professions. Il me resterait à entrer plus profondément dans les détails d'un plan organique ; c'est ce que j'essaierai de faire la prochaine fois en abordant les vocations.

Adieu pour aujourd'hui, et affection pour toujours.



LETTRE QUATRIÈME.

On dit avec vérité qu'on peut juger du degré de civilisation d'un peuple, en voyant la part de liberté qu'il accorde aux femmes ; cependant la civilisation et la liberté qui augmentent la lutte et le travail, ont vu plus d'une fois le progrès s'arrêter ou dévier de sa route. L'ère de l'industrie en adoucissant les mœurs violentes et la rudesse primitive de l'homme, en le délivrant de ces chefs avides et sanguinaires qui élevaient au premier rang l'art de défendre sa vie ou d'arracher celle de ses semblables, fut un progrès pour lui ; mais la femme ne fut jamais dans cette alternative : plus le souverain maître menait une vie aventureuse et guerrière, plus l'existence de son esclave bien-aimée s'écoulait tranquille et doucement occupée.

Notre époque, en faisant du mariage une transaction commerciale où l'argent l'emporte sur la

beauté de l'âme et du corps, n'est pas à cet égard en progrès sur le passé, qui attachait tant de prix aux vertus domestiques des femmes, et qui ne recherchait souvent dans une jeune fille que la douceur, la modestie et toutes les qualités personnelles.

Vous rappelez-vous, mon amie, dans le livre sublime de la plus haute antiquité, ces gracieux tableaux de la vie de famille au temps des patriarches ? ne sont-ils pas l'image symbolique de la vocation du ménage dans son expression la plus naïve et la plus touchante ? Transportez-vous dans la Mésopotamie, auprès d'une fontaine ombragée de palmiers. Cette jeune fille pleine de pudeur, vierge très-belle, que vous voyez debout au milieu de ses compagnes, occupée comme elles à puiser de l'eau, c'est Rébecca, la fiancée promise à Isaac par le Dieu d'Israël.

Je ne sais quel attrait indicible ajoutent à la beauté ces occupations de femme si simples et si communes. Ce n'est point au signe de la grandeur et de l'élégance que la fille de Bathuel, portant un vase sur l'épaule, est reconnue par Eliézer qui lui demande à boire. Si vous cherchez pourquoi l'intendant d'Abraham vient de placer entre les mains de Rébecca ces pendants d'oreilles et ces bracelets ? pourquoi ces vases d'or qu'il étale à ses pieds ? si vous vous étonnez de l'entendre énumérer avec complaisance les

troupeaux et les richesses d'Abraham, sans s'informer des trésors et des pâturages de la petite-fille de Nachor; vous en conclurez qu'en ces temps, les coutumes du mariage différaient grandement des nôtres.

« La chose est décidée de l'Éternel, répond » Laban à Eliézer, Rébecca est à toi, emmène-la » et pars; qu'elle soit la femme du fils de ton » maître : ainsi l'a dit le Très-Haut. » Alors l'envoyé se prosterna sur la terre, adora le Seigneur; puis, il conduisit la jeune fille sans dot au pays de Chanaan, dans la maison de son époux.

Nous sommes bien loin de la Genèse et des mœurs patriarcales; il ne faut point s'abuser sur les choses dont la valeur est en décroissance. Nos filles peuvent être belles et bonnes, se présenter avec grâce, s'exprimer avec aisance et modestie; on peut reconnaître leur mérite d'économie et d'ordre intérieur; mais possèderaient-elles la noble simplicité, les vertus et les talents domestiques de Nausicaa, sauraient-elles conduire un ménage avec cette activité sage et prévoyante qui faisait l'admiration de nos aïeux, si la dot qui les attend est nulle ou trop modique, craignez pour elles l'isolement et l'abandon.

Le xix^e siècle, avide et calculateur, regarde au contraire un état positif comme un capital, un douaire certain, dont il évalue l'intérêt et suppute le produit net et déterminé.

Quand les idées ne mènent plus au cloître, et que du reste les arceaux multipliés de ces saintes demeures sont pour la plupart réduits en poussière, que doit devenir une jeune personne sans fortune, sans profession et sans appui dans le monde ? C'est ce qu'on peut opposer de plus irrésistible à ceux qui croient encore que les attributions naturelles de la femme consistent dans la direction du ménage.

Si, d'un autre côté, on se plaignait de voir enlever les femmes aux soins et aux devoirs de la maternité, je répliquerai que là encore je ne songe pas plus à provoquer qu'à interdire. En voyant les tendances et les besoins qui se font jour, il n'y a qu'à subir la nécessité qui nous éclaire et nous domine. Après tout, l'éducation professionnelle n'enlèverait pas aux femmes la science du ménage, elles pourraient puiser au contraire dans les deux spécialités du commerce et de l'administration rurale les connaissances théoriques et pratiques relatives à cette fonction.

Il faut remarquer en outre que la fondation des salles d'asile, la multiplicité des écoles et des institutions ordinaires, l'instruction plus répandue qui tend à transformer la domesticité en profession, et l'industrie mercantile si ingénieuse à pourvoir à tous les menus détails de la vie usuelle, ont considérablement diminué la

charge, autrefois si essentielle et si compliquée, des maîtresses de maison. Toutes ces considérations nous obligent à convenir que les qualités naguère si vantées, si importantes de l'économie domestique ne doivent plus tenir le premier rang dans l'éducation des femmes.

Une ouvrière habile, alerte et laborieuse, qui se perfectionne dans sa profession, se fait l'arbitre de son sort, s'élève et arrive à l'aisance en devenant l'orgueil et le soutien de ses vieux parents, n'offre-t-elle pas une destinée aussi belle et aussi morale que celle de la jeune personne inoccupée qui languit et s'annule et que la mollesse et la fierté arrêtent ou font rougir à la pensée d'un état?

Une artiste qui acquiert un talent, qui arrive à la renommée et à la fortune, et jette un reflet de gloire et de bonheur sur sa famille entière, sont-ce là des positions de femmes que l'éducation doit dédaigner ou condamner à l'oubli? Je pense, au contraire, qu'elle ne saurait mieux faire que de tourner toute sa sollicitude et toute sa science vers le côté où se trouvent le mouvement et l'émulation.

Depuis longtemps, les femmes attentives et studieuses, sans ostentation, s'aident elles-mêmes et se montrent vraiment dignes d'être aidées du Ciel et des institutions des hommes.

Assez d'instruction, de luxe et d'apparat, as-

sez de ressources existent pour l'éducation des hautes classes ; les filles sans fortune ont droit à l'instruction qui leur procure à toutes un état. Pour moi, mon amie, quand j'élève la voix en faveur de la classe laborieuse à laquelle j'appartiens, quand je lui parle de courage et de persévérance, je sens que je m'adresse à qui prend plaisir et a besoin de m'écouter ; je sais que le bruit de la mode et des salons, l'écho affaîré qui répète tant d'opinions discordantes, ne rediront pas une de mes pensées ; c'est un mal dont je m'afflige, puisqu'il peut retarder le succès des idées que je crois utiles. Mais qu'importe ? tout ce que j'ai à vous apprendre sur l'éducation des femmes, concernera toujours cette portion de la société qui mérite tant d'intérêt et de dévouement.

Vous jugerez, Angélique, par l'importance que j'attache à l'éducation professionnelle, si je dois remplir avec empressement la promesse que je vous fis dans ma dernière lettre de vous entretenir des vocations.

Selon les définitions employées par l'usage, la vocation serait un mouvement intérieur, un appel secret qui nous avertit du genre de vie auquel Dieu nous prédestine. On a dit qu'elle était un vœu de la nature auquel il ne fallait jamais résister ; on a été plus loin, en affirmant qu'il y avait des vocations tellement persistantes

et souveraines , qu'elles commandaient d'autorité , se faisaient jour en dépit des obstacles et se plaçaient d'elles - mêmes au rang suprême qui leur était assigné par le destin. Comme en ces matières le champ de l'observation ne peut être clos pour personne , j'essaierai quelques réflexions à ce sujet , en ajoutant aux idées acquises ainsi que d'autres y ajouteront après moi.

Lorsqu'on étudie la chaîne mystérieuse des révolutions sociales , on découvre un dualisme régulier qui perpétue aussi son mouvement dans l'ordre des vocations qu'on voit toujours privilégiées ou néfastes. Le dogme du bien et du mal cherchant à reproduire partout son analogie a voulu voir des natures célestes à côté de celles qui se traînent péniblement sur la terre ; il a établi dans le monde de l'intelligence une échelle immense , au sommet de laquelle il a placé les créatures divines , les archanges de génie et de savoir , et à ses pieds des vocations rampantes , des âmes serviles vouées pour toujours à l'abaissement et à l'ignorance. Dans le monde de la matière , il a dit à ceux-ci : Vous serez appelés en naissant à la richesse ou à la misère ; à ceux-là : Vous recevrez le don merveilleux de la beauté ou le stigmatte repoussant de la laideur.

Sans l'apparition du christianisme , le réseau

de fer des démarcations sociales existerait encore dans toute sa rigueur et le règne abrutissant des castes comprimerait toujours les peuples de sa fatalité révoltante. En appelant tous les êtres à la conquête du bonheur éternel, en proclamant l'égalité sublime de l'âme et promettant de délier dans le ciel ce qui serait délié ici-bas, le christianisme a brisé les chaînes des vocations flétrissantes, il a effacé la tache originelle des états.

L'intelligence du dernier esclave, élevée à la hauteur de ces âmes stoïciennes, de ces esprits d'élite disséminés dans les écoles philosophiques des temps antiques, est une rénovation prodigieuse dont nous sommes encore loin d'avoir épuisé toutes les conséquences. Déclarer que tout homme possède la faculté de se connaître, la volonté de se vaincre lui-même, et poser cette clause pour condition du salut de tous, fut une prime d'émulation, un véhicule admirable offert à l'humanité.

Lorsqu'on a pu dire que l'intelligence, ce rayon qui dérive du foyer resplendissant de la lumière divine elle-même, était formée d'une essence aussi pure, quand elle avait pour enveloppe le corps le plus chétif, quand elle animait la plus humble existence, que lorsqu'elle brillait au front de l'individualité la plus belle et la plus haut placée par le destin, on a dû prévoir

que le règne des capacités ne tarderait pas à se faire jour et la vie laborieuse à s'ennoblir.

Bientôt, en effet, on vit s'élargir la sphère des professions qui se distribuèrent librement entre tous ; bientôt des vocations nouvelles, créées par le travail et l'intelligence, ne tardèrent pas à marcher de pair avec les vocations héréditaires et de droit divin, et il fut démontré qu'on n'avait qu'à propager l'éducation pour multiplier le nombre des élus dans les sommités sociales.

Sans remonter plus loin que la grande réforme politique opérée en France, les vœux de l'Église, les devoirs de la famille et la direction du ménage, étaient les seules occupations de femmes que l'éducation prît soin de cultiver ; les autres professions étaient obscures ou vouées au mépris, et les arts eux-mêmes entachés de servitude. L'éducation générale, procédant jusqu'alors en vue d'une organisation morale ou religieuse exclusive, avait dû nécessairement, tout en s'occupant des vocations, borner leur étendue ; mais à présent que la carrière monastique et les travaux d'intérieur ne sont plus les seules fonctions attribuées aux femmes, maintenant qu'il s'agit de les préparer en grande partie pour la condition directe et déterminée des professions d'art ou d'industrie de toutes sortes, on conçoit que les vocations doivent jouer un rôle important et nouveau dans la fixation des aptitudes

et la direction des choix; peut-être alors est-ce le moment d'examiner avec scrupule ce qu'on entend exactement par vocation, de préciser mieux cette disposition qui serait innée en nous, cet appel d'en-haut qu'on s'apprêterait à suivre comme la voix des oracles. Ne serait-il pas prudent de rechercher si l'on doit établir que les vocations, par elles-mêmes si changeantes, si vagues et si difficiles à constater, si les vocations qui se montrent quelquefois si tard, qui s'arrêtent souvent si vite, doivent être la règle unique et la mesure la plus certaine pour nous guider dans la décision des états? Pour vous dire toute ma pensée, je n'aperçois, dans les vocations, qu'un goût dominant, qui presque toujours prend naissance dans le milieu qui nous entoure; je ne trouve rien de fatal, rien d'irrévocable dans ces penchants qui nous plaisent et nous attirent, pas plus que dans ces répugnances qui nous éloignent; je n'y peux rien voir que l'éducation ou la volonté ne puissent convertir à leur gré en peines ou en plaisirs. Qu'on prenne toutes les organisations avant l'âge des inégalités conventionnelles de la société, il sera bien aisé de constater chez tous les êtres des désirs, des aversions et des sympathies semblables. Devant tant de vocations incertaines, tardives ou somnolentes, faut-il que l'éducation se lasse ou désespère? faut-il qu'elle s'épuise à contempler les nuances

infinies de la mobilité capricieuse ? Croyez-vous aussi qu'elle doive s'éprendre d'admiration, s'interrompre et s'effacer devant ces vocations de choix qui ne demandent, dit-on, qu'une faible culture pour monter dans les hautes régions ? J'affirme au contraire que tout individu ayant une destinée active à remplir en ce monde, l'éducation qui ne peut mesurer l'élévation à laquelle chacun peut atteindre, ne doit prendre sur elle de prononcer aucune exclusion ; elle appartient à tous sans exception, elle ne saurait refuser à personne ses leçons ni son assistance, qui sont aussi nécessaires à l'alimentation des intelligences que la nourriture matérielle est indispensable à la vie du corps.

Aujourd'hui que les royaumes de la terre, la gloire et les distinctions de tout genre sont à la veille d'échoir aux capacités acquises, à la valeur intellectuelle du talent et du savoir, jamais on n'a tant parlé de vocations natives, de génie et de dispositions naturelles ; s'il fallait en croire les Solons et les Lycurgues de l'époque actuelle, la tâche de l'éducation serait bien simple et bien facile, il ne s'agirait plus d'élever les âmes en leur faisant conquérir la force morale qui conduit à la vertu ; toute intelligence irait se placer d'elle-même dans la case correspondant aux zones tracées par la science nouvelle ; les peuples n'auraient plus qu'à marcher et à s'aligner au cordeau ; ainsi le doigt de Dieu aurait effacé en

vain les démarcations supérieures qui résidaient autrefois dans la force physique et la beauté corporelle, pour nous faire obéir encore au hasard de la naissance, qui ne connaît que l'arbitraire dans ses réprobations ou ses faveurs. Ainsi s'annulerait le libre arbitre et s'arrêterait l'essor de la volonté devant les vocations privilégiées basées sur l'excellence des fibres intellectuelles.

On devine aisément combien serait éminente alors la tribu de prédilection qui jugerait les organisations en délimitant et traçant d'une manière ineffaçable les linéaments régulateurs de chaque destinée.

Qu'on admette, si l'on veut, les classifications et les corporations de tous les ordres; mais qu'on n'affirme pas qu'il y a pour chaque individu dans chaque génération des vocations écrites et marquées par la nature organique même.

Les révolutions changeantes qui s'opèrent, les mouvements contraires dans les destinées d'un même peuple et d'une même individualité, nous montrent l'influence incessante des institutions humaines sur les habitudes et sur les mœurs. L'éducation se présente toujours à nous maîtresse des vocations et pliant les intelligences au genre de vie, aux opinions, aux goûts divers que les temps ou la nécessité réclament.

Les vocations individuelles peuvent obéir à la voix du devoir ou de la volonté, comme celles

des peuples fléchissent devant la parole des législateurs ou le commandement des despotes. Était-ce pour suivre la vocation conforme à l'organisation morale et physique des femmes, qu'on soumettait les jeunes filles de Sparte à la même éducation que les hommes, en leur apprenant à courir dans le stade et à lancer le disque et le javelot en présence des rois, des magistrats et même des jeunes gens qu'elles excitaient à la gloire tantôt par des éloges et tantôt par des railleries? C'était une condition bien cruelle et qui semble bien éloignée du sentiment maternel que nous connaissons à présent, que celle qui appelait les femmes spartiates à la vocation de mère; l'une d'elles, à qui l'on vient apprendre que son fils a été tué sans quitter son rang, répond : « Qu'on l'enterre, et qu'on mette son frère à sa place. »

Le moyen-âge, selon son génie et ses besoins, avait inspiré la vocation surnaturelle du célibat au tiers des populations qu'il refoulait dans les cloîtres. Demandez à un musulman ce qu'il pense de la vocation des femmes, il vous répondra que Mahomet les appelle à la réclusion et au repos.

L'éducation n'a point à rechercher les droits nouveaux de la femme, ni les vocations sociales à venir que la Providence fera prédominer en elle; sa mission est de féconder dans les géné-

rations qu'elle instruit et qu'elle élève, toute la force intellectuelle et morale des facultés dont le Créateur leur a prodigué les germes.

M. de Bonald définit l'homme *une intelligence servie par des organes*. Je crois que l'éducation doit préférer la définition du fondateur de l'Enseignement universel, qui appelle l'homme ou la femme *une volonté servie par une intelligence*. Avec M. de Bonald, on pourrait croire aux vocations fatales qui devraient naître de l'inégalité matérielle des organes; avec la pensée de M. Jacotot, plus religieuse et plus vaste, les vocations sont libres comme la volonté.

Il n'y a qu'une seule et même intelligence obéissant à tous les goûts et à tous les désirs; mais la conscience est juge du choix, la raison fait mouvoir la volonté et se soumet à la morale qui trace le devoir.

En fait d'éducation, il ne s'agit pas d'en appeler à la nature; le naturel de l'enfance, comme celui de l'âge viril, est presque toujours l'insouciance et la paresse; s'il fallait consulter tous les caprices et toute la mobilité des enfants, s'il fallait faire consister l'étude dans l'attrait et le plaisir, les résultats moraux et intellectuels seraient grandement compromis. On parle souvent de ces natures si heureusement douées, de ces organisations à part qui réussissent à toutes choses sans fixité et sans peine; on cite des in-

telligences qui font en une heure ce qui coûte à tant d'autres des journées entières d'attention et de travail.

Ce sont de ces phénix que je suis encore à rencontrer; j'ai toujours vu l'enfant qui ne s'applique pas ne réussir en aucune chose : l'élève inattentive et frivole se lasse aussitôt du nouveau devoir, du modèle ou du morceau de musique qu'on renouvelle à son gré, que des études durables qu'on lui impose ; la petite fille détruit aussi vite le jouet qui l'amuse que le livre ennuyeux qui lui apprend à lire. C'est parce qu'il y a tant d'efforts à faire et tant de contraintes à subir, qu'on attache un si grand prix à la possession du talent et de la science ; il n'y a pas de vocation , si lisiblement écrite qu'elle soit dans les astres, qui ne coûte des soupirs et des larmes. Si la raison et la fortitude n'étaient pas là sans cesse pour raffermir les vocations qui hésitent et qui chancellent, on ne verrait que dépouilles flottantes et frocs abandonnés sur les orties et sur les ronces qui bordent les sentiers conduisant aux professions.

Lorsqu'on examine l'ordre actuel des états auxquels se livrent les femmes , on y remarque quatre divisions distinctes : la vocation religieuse , l'enseignement , les beaux-arts et l'industrie.

La profession monastique des femmes , qui se

trouve si anciennement constituée, se perpétue sous les ailes protectrices de l'Église.

L'enseignement général n'existe pas comme institution gouvernementale pour les femmes ; c'est une des spécialités les plus urgentes qui réclame une université et une école normale.

Un seul enseignement professionnel est organisé pour elles, c'est celui du Conservatoire de musique ; on ne conçoit pas que l'enseignement spécial du dessin et de la peinture soit encore à fonder en leur faveur ; on voit s'élever des palais somptueux, des écoles splendides destinées à l'étude des beaux-arts, et personne ne songe à demander pourquoi tant de femmes, qui trouvent dans la pratique du dessin et de la peinture une profession lucrative, n'ont aucun droit à occuper une partie de ces amphithéâtres et de ces loges ? pourquoi elles ne profitent pas des ressources bienfaisantes que ces écoles prodiguent aux jeunes gens qui les fréquentent ? Si la fondation du Conservatoire a été d'une nécessité plus pressante, il faut convenir qu'elle a présenté des difficultés bien autrement grandes, devant lesquelles n'a cependant pas reculé le génie organisateur de l'empire ; mais chacune de ces spécialités demande un chapitre à part, que je me propose de vous soumettre.

Je n'ai point oublié, mon amie, que je vous promettais dans ma dernière lettre d'entrer dans

les détails d'un plan organique au sujet de l'enseignement des professions industrielles. N'allez pas croire que j'aie formé le dessein de vous tracer les proportions matérielles d'une telle institution; à moins de faire un ouvrage idéal, de concevoir un projet de fantaisie, sans application possible, on ne peut créer une conception de quelque valeur, si l'on ne possède des dimensions, des documents et des données certaines en rapport avec la réalisation. Ce qu'on peut faire de plus utile, c'est d'apporter quelques matériaux à la pensée qui concevra l'ensemble d'un tel édifice, je désire principalement faire sentir aujourd'hui la possibilité d'une telle création.

Les communautés religieuses du passé, celles de nos jours et la maison royale de Saint-Denis, si sagement administrées par les femmes, suffiront pour montrer qu'elles possèdent les qualités d'ordre et d'économie, le caractère et la gravité essentiels à la tenue des grands établissements; le degré d'instruction où sont arrivées maintenant les femmes, permet de trouver en elles toutes les connaissances que l'enseignement des spécialités industrielles nécessite. Ne pourrait-on pas regarder aussi comme une base importante, un élément pratique fécond en résultats, ce principe admis dans les apprentissages qui procure un salaire à l'apprentie après deux ou trois ans de temps et de travail donnés gratuitement à l'ac-

quisition d'un état. Cette manière sérieuse et réelle d'envisager les études professionnelles serait tout-à-fait distincte de l'enseignement des théories et de l'application suivie jusqu'à ce jour, où jamais on n'a su mettre entre les mains des élèves les moyens de gagner immédiatement leur vie au sortir des bancs de l'école.

Il y aurait plus d'un avantage à faire ainsi de l'enseignement tout-à-fait pratique, à produire et à fabriquer réellement comme il arrive chaque jour dans tous les ateliers industriels où l'on utilise même les premiers essais des plus jeunes commençantes. Cette méthode donnerait une importance salulaire à tous les travaux qu'on pourrait confier à l'entreprise et faciliterait l'économie des matériaux de toute nature; elle donnerait aux études un aspect d'occupations sérieuses et productives, et accoutumerait les élèves de l'industrie à la célérité et à l'exactitude. Une telle mesure les forcerait à un caractère attentif et appliqué bien distinct des penchants frivoles et dissipés des élèves de l'enseignement général, qui ont tant de propension à prendre les habitudes insouciantes et légères des enfants de la classe riche.

On peut présumer que la fondation d'un enseignement aussi peu connu que celui des professions industrielles doit présenter de nombreuses difficultés. Ne serait-il pas important de fixer la

hiérarchie des professions, de savoir où s'arrête tel état, où commence tel autre? Il est aussi des professions plus séduisantes et plus avantageuses les unes que les autres; lorsqu'on verrait le plus grand nombre des élèves se décider pour les mêmes états, en dépit des vocations soi-disant naturelles, dans quel sens faudrait-il agir? Ne serait-il pas urgent d'établir des gradations d'état, de ne permettre de monter dans certaines professions prétendues supérieures qu'après avoir excellé dans celles qui sont le moins recherchées?

Il faudrait bien se garder aussi de suivre l'ordre adopté dans la fabrication actuelle des ateliers ordinaires, où l'on fractionne la confection des ouvrages en une multitude de parties différentes; il est facile de voir qu'en subdivisant ainsi un art ou un métier pour arriver à la plus grande célérité possible, on emploie un procédé d'exploitation, un expédient de fortune créé par l'adresse inventive des entrepreneurs, dont la coutume est anti-progressive et ne peut former que des praticiens aveugles et routiniers.

C'est pourquoi il me semblerait sage d'admettre dans un enseignement aussi social que celui des professions le principe de l'émancipation intellectuelle. Avec cette pensée des intelligences indépendantes inspirée à toutes les volontés, la perfection n'a plus de limites, et tout individu peut

acquérir une originalité distincte, s'il sait se défier de la mobilité qui, au lieu de concentrer son attention entière sur un seul point dont les rapports sont infinis, s'égare d'un objet à un autre en croyant trouver sans cesse des aperçus nouveaux.

Les femmes adonnées aux professions ont encore plus besoin d'émancipation que les hommes pour ne pas être maîtrisées et rapetissées dans leur intelligence; pourquoi se laisseraient-elles imposer des fractions d'état, lorsqu'elles sont capables d'en concevoir et d'en pratiquer l'ensemble? C'est la croyance à la volonté qu'il importe principalement d'enseigner à toutes; lorsqu'on sait vouloir, point d'état médiocre, point de position si obscure et si pénible qu'on ne puisse améliorer et bénir.

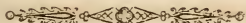
On croirait qu'en s'abandonnant à l'attraction d'une vocation séduisante, l'intelligence devrait doubler la vitesse de ses acquisitions; souvent il en arrive ainsi; mais la force du vouloir vient briser cette règle en multipliant les exceptions; de même qu'on voit une mère s'éprendre d'affection plus vive pour l'enfant disgracieux et maladif qui augmente sa peine, de même on voit l'élève se mettre à cultiver avec amour l'étude ingrate et déplaisante qui lui coûte tant d'efforts et de veilles.

Il y a un danger réel à faire consister dans les vocations naissantes l'espérance de l'enseigne-

ment et à les prendre pour signe précurseur des grandes œuvres; car, en définitive, toute vocation n'a de valeur que lorsqu'elle vient constater, vers le milieu d'une carrière, les mérites et le bonheur d'une renommée noblement acquise.

Mais je sens qu'il faut terminer cette épître : je regrette d'avoir bien peu dit sur un sujet d'une telle étendue; un autre jour, je vous entretiendrai des vocations enseignantes.

Au revoir, bonne amie ! quand ma plume s'arrête, je suis deux fois heureuse, parce que j'ai rempli ma tâche et que ma pensée plus libre revient tout entière à vous.



LETTRE CINQUIÈME.

S'il est vrai, mon amie, quel que soit l'éclat des dispositions ou la voix secrète qui nous appelle au choix des professions, qu'il faille y répondre sans cesse par une persévérance soutenue et en montrant un grand empire sur soi-même; s'il est vrai qu'il n'y ait point de science ou de génie qui ne demande des études continues, point de haute moralité qui ne se forme sans habitudes péniblement contractées et à la longue; convenez que ce qui importe le plus dans toute vocation, c'est l'élévation de l'âme et la force de la raison. Il y aura toujours des états tellement pénibles et ingrats à remplir, que sans une grâce particulière d'en-haut ou une injonction expresse de la société même, un grand nombre resterait en souffrance; cela seul ferait présumer que la loi du sacrifice doit durer autant que le monde.

Le passé d'où nous sommes sortis, et ce qui

nous en reste de sain et de moral après tant de vicissitudes subversives, est encore tout empreint de ce caractère civilisateur et religieux. Pour constituer une vocation, la moralité dirigeante des derniers siècles, en consultant les goûts et les aptitudes de ses élus, savait les rectifier et les conduire; elle s'appliquait à fortifier la faiblesse en insistant sur le devoir; on la voyait désigner du doigt l'œuvre à remplir; et comme Dieu et la félicité future étaient le but et la fin de toutes choses, si rébelle et opiniâtre que fût une inclination contraire, plus d'une volonté inflexible finissait par s'assouplir devant la terreur du châtiment éternel.

Ces réflexions me sont suggérées, en ce moment où je porte ma pensée vers la vocation de l'enseignement, par la résignation qu'une telle profession demande. Je ne connais pas une condition qui ait plus besoin de chercher au-dessus du monde la récompense de ses mérites. Les époques organiques les plus morales avaient bien jugé cette mission de patience et d'abnégation en la confiant au sacerdoce.

De nos jours cette carrière a pris une extension remarquable parmi les femmes; elle est encore une fonction grave et relevée qui nécessite la réunion bien rare du dévouement le plus entier avec la science la plus solide et la plus étendue; mais à défaut de direction suprême la

plupart des femmes qui se vouent à cet état ne paraissent pas soupçonner les qualités qu'il exige. Les unes, femmes du monde, habiles seulement à utiliser leurs relations de famille, étayées par de hauts patronages, s'en viennent l'exploiter comme une industrie; les autres, appartenant à la classe pauvre, choisissent cette vocation sans instruction préalable comme un pis-aller, ou un expédient pour échapper à la misère la plus pressante.

Dans le nombre des états qui conviennent aux femmes, c'est en vain cependant qu'on en chercherait un plus propre à la culture et à l'élévation de l'intelligence, ou un plus digne d'inspirer la ferveur d'un noble zèle. Toute âme ardente, aux aspirations généreuses, ne peut trouver dans aucune autre situation une occasion plus heureuse de faire le bien.

Si vous cherchez une fortune grande et rapide, ce n'est pas à la carrière de l'enseignement qu'il faut la demander; mais si, bien pénétrée du désir d'être utile à vos semblables, vous ambitionnez la tâche glorieuse de donner votre vie en exemple, si vous trouvez le bonheur dans la satisfaction de vous-même, dans les goûts simples et les habitudes sérieuses, vous pouvez entrer en cette voie, malgré la foule des concurrentes qui s'y pressent; on trouve si rarement parmi elles les qualités essentielles à cette vocation, que toutes celles qui sont assez sûres d'elles-mêmes

pour commander aux autres seront toujours bien placées dans une profession qui leur accordera, quoi qu'on dise, un sort modeste et honorable.

Je crois que pour se former une idée nette des devoirs de l'enseignement, il faut les examiner distinctement dans l'enseignement public et dans l'enseignement privé. Quoique la charge d'institutrice particulière porte avec elle ses rigueurs et ses exigences, bien qu'elle demande une vertu et une instruction peu communes, on peut la remplir cependant avec moins de difficultés que celle d'institutrice de l'enseignement général. La direction d'une ou deux enfants n'est pas comparable à celle d'une classe entière. Telle qui conserve assez d'autorité, assez de présence d'esprit pour se faire obéir d'une seule élève, n'a souvent ni le courage ni l'habileté de commander à un plus grand nombre.

Les obligations morales et la pratique de l'enseignement public sont plus difficiles et plus graves qu'on ne l'imagine; on se fait institutrice parce que cette profession paraît être le prolongement naturel de l'instruction ordinaire, et je suis encore à me demander comment une si grande quantité de femmes s'acquittent aussi passablement d'un emploi dont elles se chargent avec tant de légèreté.

Il n'existe en effet pour les femmes aucun établissement spécial où elles puissent trouver

la direction suprême et les théories d'enseignement qui leur sont indispensables ; l'instruction s'est répandue , s'est fortifiée d'une manière étonnante parmi les femmes, et ce mouvement s'est opéré presque seul à l'imitation des hommes et sous l'inspiration des familles. Le progrès des institutions publiques dirigées par elles en a été plutôt le résultat que la cause, tant sont puissants et enracinés les préjugés et l'ignorance qui les arrêtent. Et peut-être que les institutrices timides et superficielles comme le sont la plus grande partie des femmes, resteront longtemps encore étrangères et indifférentes aux brillants travaux d'enseignement que les hommes accomplissent chaque jour, ainsi qu'à l'universalité et à la hardiesse des points de vue nouveaux qu'ils embrassent.

La marque la plus certaine de la nullité morale et scientifique des femmes qui gouvernent les grandes maisons d'enseignement, c'est leur assiduité à fréquenter le monde et l'éloignement qu'elles ressentent pour les études et pour les classes, leur répugnance à s'occuper des détails pénibles et fastidieux, pour goûter dans la résidence habituelle de leur intérieur toutes les douceurs d'une vie de luxe et d'aisance. Une preuve évidente d'incapacité et de vanité malheureuse dans les jeunes maîtresses, c'est le mépris qu'elles font paraître pour l'instruction

des commençantes, le dédain et l'insouciance avec lesquels elles s'assujettissent à donner leurs soins aux très-jeunes enfants. C'est pitié de les voir négliger et méconnaître une étude aussi belle, et des observations aussi profitables que celles des premières lueurs de la pensée naïve de ces intéressants petits êtres, pour convoiter l'enseignement des classes supérieures. On méconnaît ainsi trop souvent une profession si noble et si utile, parce qu'on la remplit avec hauteur et qu'on se croit humilié des minuties et de la trivialité des services multipliés qu'elle réclame.

Quant à l'enseignement privé, vous savez comment on s'y comporte. Lorsqu'une jeune personne se présente pour être gouvernante des enfants d'une grande maison, bien rarement elle a mesuré la tâche qu'elle désire entreprendre; à cet égard elle est bien loin de partager les scrupules de l'immortel précepteur d'Émile; la grande préoccupation des deux parties contractantes, c'est la négociation des appointements; le système à suivre et les chances de réussite sont ce qui occupe le moins. Du reste, on sacrifie volontiers l'instruction et les mérites essentiels d'une excellente maîtresse à la nécessité d'un médiocre talent musical; on choisit de préférence un mentor artiste en considération de l'agilité des doigts. Le piano est devenu le principal, l'éducation n'est plus que l'accessoire :

telle est la frivolité avec laquelle se traite la plupart du temps une si sérieuse affaire; et qu'on s'étonne après cela du trouble et de l'affaissement des choses morales au sein des familles! Un gouverneur! disait Rousseau, ah! quelle âme sublime! En vérité pour faire un homme, il faut être père ou plus qu'un homme soi-même; et pour faire une femme, ajouterai-je, il n'y a qu'une mère! l'enseignement maternel peut seul agir avec l'intensité de zèle et de tendresse et surtout avec la latitude que l'éducation comporte.

Une mère, institutrice de ses enfants, leur communique une vie de plus; elle ajoute la maternité de l'intelligence à celle de la nature; rien ne peut égaler l'orgueil et le bonheur d'une mère qui peut se flatter d'avoir contribué seule à l'éducation complète de sa fille : je ne fais point un crime à celles qui se débarrassent d'une charge si belle que toutes pourraient remplir, mais qu'elles ne s'en prennent qu'à elles-mêmes si les progrès et le caractère de leurs enfants ne répondent point à leur attente. Quoi! votre patience et votre mansuétude se sont lassées d'un premier essai! votre humeur s'est aigrie tout d'abord; vous avez entrevu combien il y avait à faire, et, pour un modique salaire, vous demandez toutes ces choses à une étrangère qui a tant d'autres enfants à conduire; vous croyez qu'il suffit d'un diplôme pour opérer toutes ces merveilles! mais, je vous

le répète encore, la vocation de l'enseignement privé consiste surtout dans le dévouement et la moralité. C'est assez vous dire qu'elle est accessible aux mères qui sont pauvres comme à celles que la fortune a comblées de ses dons. Le succès des études n'exige pas la science et les talents que vous croyez; Montaigne peut venir à mon aide, pour vous convaincre sur ce point : « On ne » cesse, dit-il, de crier à nos oreilles comme » qui verserait dans un entonnoir, et notre charge, » ce n'est que de redire ce qu'on nous a dict; je » voudroy qu'il corrigeast cette partie, et que, de » belle arrivée, selon la partie de l'âme qu'il a en » main, il commençast à la mettre sur la moustre, » lui faisant goûter les choses, les choisir et discerner d'elle-même, quelquefois lui ouvrant le chemin, quelquefois le lui laissant ouvrir; je ne veux pas qu'il invente et parle seul, je veux qu'il écoute son disciple parler à son tour. »

Ainsi doit se voiler l'érudition, et s'effacer le savoir devant la patience. On a ajouté depuis Montaigne qu'il était bien plus facile à tout enseigneur de faire parade de ce qu'il sait, que d'obliger l'élève à parler, et de vérifier pièce à pièce s'il a regardé et reposé son attention sur l'objet de son étude. Au surplus, avec l'ouvrage matériel, le résumé, ou le modèle spécial pour tout art et pour toute science sur lequel se rencontre l'attention du disciple et du maître, cette vérifi-

cation est facile à faire, pourvu que l'exactitude et le courage n'abandonnent jamais le dernier. Parce qu'il ne s'agit pas de s'assurer si l'élève a bien vu et bien fait, mais s'il a regardé et cherché à bien faire. La répétition, le travail et l'ingénieuse nature feront tout le reste sans vous.

Si nous voyons, par tout ce qui précède, quels ménagements il faut apporter à l'œuvre d'une éducation isolée, que penserons-nous alors d'une directrice de pensionnat qui a une si grande charge d'âmes, et de la maîtresse qui conduit une classe nombreuse?

Je voudrais, mon amie, pouvoir ne rien omettre de la difficulté et des misères de l'enseignement public à l'époque actuelle; de tout temps, il a fallu, je pense, dans cette condition des institutrices, dans cette opposition de l'âge mûr et raisonnable, sans cesse aux prises avec l'activité folle et bouillante de la jeunesse, une dose d'aménité et de constance qui fait la gloire et la sainteté de cette profession; mais la consolation la plus douce et le secours le plus efficace qu'elle puisse recevoir, c'est à coup sûr d'être appréciée et secondée par la confiance absolue des parents; c'est de ne faire qu'un avec la morale fixe et vivace qui se pratique avec ferveur et enthousiasme dans l'intérieur des familles; car alors l'enseignement n'a plus cette âpreté, ni ces écueils décourageants qu'il présente aux époques de doute et de désordre

moral, pareils à ceux qui se rencontrent au temps où nous vivons, puisqu'il devient une fonction religieuse, respectée, possédant une hiérarchie vénérable qui rend l'autorité facile et l'obéissance attrayante.

Cependant l'entraînement illusoire de l'égalité, la nécessité, la force des choses qui pousse le monde vers un but ignoré de tous, ont propagé l'instruction des femmes outre mesure; les maisons séculières d'éducation se sont multipliées partout, le professorat est devenu pour elles une fonction sociale des plus importantes. Toute institutrice qui persévère dans cette voie pendant un grand nombre d'années, et qui, sans autre assistance que son travail, obtient la confiance, donne, il me semble, des preuves d'un mérite que la société ne devrait pas laisser sans récompense.

Il ne faut pas oublier que cette profession, qui forme une réunion si considérable de femmes éminemment utiles, est remplie, à l'instruction près peut-être, plus dignement par elles que par les hommes. On ne peut se défendre à ce propos de remarquer qu'il est étrange de voir qu'une agrégation si vaste, la plus sage et la plus éclairée de notre sexe, celle qui montre l'exemple d'un désintéressement et d'un travail si opiniâtre pendant la vigueur de l'âge, ne soit pas un corps constitué, jouissant de ses droits et pouvant

offrir à tous les membres qui la composent, une retraite convenable et sûre dans la vieillesse.

Du reste, ce n'est pas la seule chose qu'il y aurait à faire pour les progrès de l'enseignement; la distance qui sépare le professorat des femmes de celui des hommes, est une preuve de la situation arriérée dans laquelle nous nous trouvons; mais il faut convenir que les obstacles sont graves; on ne peut aborder cette matière sans arriver à des innovations qui effraient, et pour lesquelles on n'est nullement préparé.

La première de toutes, et qui permettrait des améliorations actuellement impossibles, ce serait de ne confier l'enseignement des femmes qu'à des femmes elles-mêmes; le jour où cette réforme s'effectuera sera la preuve d'une supériorité réelle dans leur instruction; dès ce moment, tout deviendra possible. Ne croyez pas toutefois que je blâme entièrement l'intervention des hommes dans l'enseignement. Pour longtemps encore, je la crois indispensable, et même, sous quelques rapports, je la trouve excellente. Ce n'est pas que je veuille contester tous les dangers qu'il peut y avoir à exposer, dans l'enseignement privé surtout, les jeunes filles au prestige que peut exercer sur elles la parole éloquente d'un maître; mais en toute chose, la logique est exclusive et conduit trop loin; si je désire voir les professeurs s'éloigner des institutions, c'est principalement

afin que les femmes se mettent plus vite en demeure de remplir parfaitement elles-mêmes toutes les chaires d'enseignement que les hommes ont illustrées avant elles ; il s'agit presque du salut des institutions dans cette question du progrès des maîtresses. Puis, il faut bien le dire aussi, les professeurs hors de ligne, ceux qui ont su se faire une renommée dans l'enseignement des femmes, sont très-rares : les uns font de la science de luxe dont l'aristocratie peut seule approcher ; les autres, par leur présence périodique dans les institutions, jettent sur elles un éclat qui leur est funeste dès qu'il vient à manquer. La destinée d'une maison ne doit pas reposer sur la valeur d'un nom étranger. Mais de tels hommes sont pour les institutrices des modèles précieux qu'elles doivent s'efforcer d'imiter.

Cependant, mon amie, la femme habile qui gouverne et stimule une classe entière, serait-elle capable d'inspirer à la jeunesse l'enthousiasme des sentiments religieux d'humanité, aurait-elle l'éloquence érudite qui, dans un cours, épure le goût en donnant un essor à l'intelligence, sans imposer sa pensée comme la seule vraie et ingénieuse ; posséderait-elle ce grand art de réveiller les idées qui sommeillent, de les faire naître, de les conserver et d'en enseigner l'emploi, tout cet ensemble ne constituerait à lui seul qu'une des branches de l'enseignement. Parler une heure ou

deux sur un art ou sur une science, captiver un jeune auditoire par la lucidité des démonstrations, ne prouve rien pour la sérénité de l'âme et l'excellence du caractère qu'il faut avoir pour passer sa vie entière à régenter des enfants.

A cet égard, la plus humble maîtresse d'école de village qui conserve son calme et sa douce patience au milieu des rustiques marmots qui l'entourent, est aussi méritante aux yeux de la société et de Dieu lui-même que la directrice de grande maison, zélée et infatigable, qui a les yeux sans cesse attentifs et le cœur toujours indulgent pour la grande famille que la Providence a confiée à sa garde. Il faut avoir exercé cet état pour se faire une idée des tortures sans cesse renaissantes qu'il inflige à celles qui le remplissent avec conscience. C'est le spectacle incessant de la paix et du repos luttant avec la fougue et l'emportement. Comme la roche impassible résiste à la vague agitée et bruyante qui se renouvelle sans relâche, l'institutrice doit opposer le courage et la douceur à l'étourderie et à la mobilité qui jamais ne s'arrêtent. Si la nature n'a pas doué toute jeune fille qui se destine à cette carrière d'une santé robuste, elle peut renoncer d'avance à ce genre d'occupation, parce que ses forces ne sauraient y suffire. C'est par un noviciat lentement préparé, une pratique assidue qu'il faudrait s'assurer de ses progrès et de sa réussite ; je l'aimerais jeune, gracieuse et d'une

haute stature, afin qu'elle pût imposer et plaire aux enfants qu'elle est appelée à conduire : il faut à cette fonction difficile toute la vigueur et l'animation que la jeunesse comporte ; car, en notre malheureux temps qui a perdu la tradition sainte du respect des vieillards, tout est précoce et s'use vite ; la jeunesse n'obéit bien qu'à la jeunesse. Cependant, avant trente ans, une femme qui a pris à cœur son avenir et bien utilisé son temps, doit avoir un nom dans l'enseignement ; mais savez-vous à quelle condition ? c'est en faisant une complète abnégation d'elle-même et en prenant à tâche l'avancement et la perfection des enfants étrangers qu'elle élève ; c'est en les comblant de caresses, en les adoptant comme les siens propres, qu'elle pourra se parer du beau titre d'institutrice. Je me suis plainte souvent moi-même de l'existence médiocre et décourageante des sous-maîtresses ; mais on doit reconnaître en bonne justice que la plupart ne peuvent attribuer qu'à elles seules l'infériorité et la triste position qu'elles conservent.

Pour ne pas languir dans la médiocrité, il faut donner à toute profession un temps d'attente et d'essais, faire l'épreuve d'une volonté profonde et apprendre à obéir avant de commander ; le moindre geste, l'acte le plus indifférent d'une jeune personne qui s'essaie à remplir l'emploi de maîtresse devient un indice de vocation. Tout révèle une

âme honnête et droite qui a le désir de mériter les applaudissements et la considération de son entourage.

Il ne suffit pas d'avoir les goûts quelque peu littéraires, de posséder un mince talent d'agrément, de se présenter avec les manières aisées et le langage facile de la haute société; il ne suffit pas d'avoir l'extérieur sévère et une haute idée de soi, de posséder cette exactitude qui s'acquitte à peu près bien du devoir imposé sans jamais aller au-delà; ce sont des qualités tièdes et vulgaires dont l'enseignement se contente faute de mieux. Mais le pire, et ce qui se rencontre par malheur le plus ordinairement dans tous les rangs de cette fonction, c'est d'y apporter les distractions et la frivolité des manières du monde.

En général, quand vous voyez une jeune postulante porter un livre en classe et se complaire dans une lecture à la mode, prendre plaisir à l'élégante broderie ou à la tapisserie gracieuse qu'elle se destine à elle-même, au milieu de ces enfants bruyants et inattentifs dont la pétulance excessive exige une surveillance de toutes les minutes, c'est d'un fâcheux augure. Si vous voyez une sous-maîtresse trop occupée de sa toilette et de ses agréments personnels, impatiente et fière dans son commandement; si une autre se montre lente et négligée dans ses ajustements, trop familière avec les élèves, si vous surprenez en elle,

lorsque la cloche se fait entendre, la même joie que manifeste une enfant qui se débarrasse de l'étude comme d'un fardeau, c'est qu'elles sont indignes de la confiance qu'on leur accorde; toutes celles, en un mot, qui ne vous paraissent pas blessées à la vue du désordre, sans cesse empressées et attentives à faire dominer partout où elles se trouvent le sentiment de ce qui est juste et bien, vous pouvez certifier avec assurance qu'elles ne sont pas encore appelées à l'enseignement.

On reconnaît la marque de la vocation franche et invariable d'une jeune novice, à son amour pour les enfants; vous la verrez sans cesse entourée et recherchée de ses élèves; le zèle et le devoir de son état ne lui laissent qu'une seule pensée, c'est la perfection et la sollicitude du troupeau confié à sa surveillance. Pieuse et modeste, toujours exacte et avant l'heure à tous les exercices, bonne et confiante avec les enfants qu'elle dirige, elle fait servir toutes choses à leur instruction : c'est une leçon vivante, une mère adorée des petites filles et un modèle séduisant que les grandes imitent par instinct et par plaisir.

Son âme, sensible au moindre mécontentement des parents, s'identifie aux craintes et aux succès de la maison dont elle obtient l'estime et la confiance sans réserve.

Au grand attrait qu'elle trouve dans les lec-

tures sérieuses et substantielles, vous pouvez deviner la digne aspirante à l'art de l'enseignement. On peut la juger rien qu'à la simple bibliothèque qu'elle rassemble du fruit de son travail; elle saura choisir de préférence les Pères de l'église et Fénelon pour modèles de raison éloquente et de sagesse douce et persuasive; Bossuet et Massillon, pour étudier chez eux le talent de la parole, l'élégance de la forme et la chaleur de l'expression; elle aura placé au premier rang les moralistes principaux et toutes les femmes qui ont écrit sur l'éducation, puis viendront les philosophes qui se sont occupés de méthodes. Voilà les auteurs essentiels dont elle s'attache à comprendre et à posséder l'esprit, les compagnons muets de sa pensée et de ses veilles. La littérature ne vient qu'après; c'est pour elle une distraction, une étude facile; tout ce qui est langue, histoire et sciences classiques doit repasser sans cesse entre ses mains; et si à tant de qualités précieuses elle ajoute le sentiment profond des arts et possède un talent réel, soyez sûre qu'elle n'en fera paraître aucune affectation, et que sa plus grande joie sera toujours de se montrer à toute heure prête à verser dans le cœur et l'intelligence des autres tous les trésors de bonté, de grâce et de savoir qu'elle aura recueillis pour elle avec tant de labeur.

Après une telle application, une volonté si

ferme de parvenir et de progresser dans une voie si droite et si louable, dites, mon amie, si une jeune fille doit avoir quelque chose à redouter pour son avenir? dites, si elle ne rencontrera pas en tous lieux des égards et des marques sincères d'affection et d'intérêt? Elle se gardera bien de désespérer, si, par hasard, une ingratitude folle et ignare venait à méconnaître de si nobles services; elle saura bien que ce ne pourra jamais être qu'une exception révoltante dont la durée sera passagère.

Croyez-vous, Angélique, qu'une existence ainsi consacrée au bonheur des autres soit une position ordinaire qu'on recherche comme tant d'autres pour l'éclat et la richesse qu'elles procurent? Croyez-vous que les dégoûts et les entraves qu'elle présente, les rares perfections qu'elle exige n'effraieraient pas la plupart de celles qui la désirent, si un tel dévouement n'était inspiré et obtenu par la force de la pensée religieuse, si l'on ne se sentait maintenu et protégé par une chaîne sainte, un rayon qui remonte à Dieu en rattachant la vie individuelle à celle de l'humanité?

A voir l'austérité de conduite et l'abnégation extrême que je demande pour cette vocation, on pensera peut-être que l'enseignement des communautés religieuses de femmes serait celui qui se trouve le plus conforme à ma manière de voir. Si c'était la conclusion à tirer de

tout ce que je viens d'exposer à ce sujet, c'est qu'alors, malgré moi, ma parole aurait donné une interprétation contraire à ma pensée.

Je vénère et j'apprécie les institutions religieuses dans leurs traditions antiques, dans leur force morale et persistante. Je les regarde comme un asile mystérieux pour la prière, un refuge consolateur pour quelques âmes isolées et souffrantes, que la foi ravive encore ; mais, comme instruction publique, je ne les crois utiles et bonnes qu'à s'alimenter et à se constituer elles-mêmes. On doit reconnaître la stabilité, le principe d'ordre et d'association qui font leur puissance et leur sécurité ; on doit admirer l'esprit d'autorité, l'inspiration et l'unité qui les dirigent ; mais, au temps présent, l'enseignement qu'on y donne et les vocations spéciales qui s'y déclarent, sont tellement en désaccord avec la civilisation actuelle, qu'on se voit forcé de les considérer comme étrangères au mouvement des choses vivantes. Il me semble qu'elles sont, sous certains rapports, bien plus impropres que les maisons séculières à propager la science et les vertus sociales dont l'époque a si grand besoin. Comment concevoir, en effet, l'enseignement dans tout ce qui touche aujourd'hui aux investigations ardentes des intelligences, à la direction essentielle des qualités du cœur, aux relations du monde, à tous les rapports de mœurs et d'inté-

rêt, à tous les liens de famille, à l'indépendance et à la diversité des idées et des situations qui composent la vie réelle et animée d'une société comme la nôtre, lorsqu'une barrière infranchissable vous en sépare? comment donner des conseils pratiques, signaler des écueils lorsqu'on ne possède qu'une sagesse négative, quand on ne peut offrir que des précautions préventives à l'usage des riches, ou procurer des connaissances bornées et obscures destinées aux générations éteintes? De quelle manière les arts divins et la science attrayante féconderaient-ils encore les pieuses méditations du cloître? Comment les corporations enseignantes pourraient-elles, comme à leur origine, en conserver la flamme, en répandre autour d'elles l'enthousiasme sacré, lorsqu'elles se glorifient de leur ignorance et de leur étroitesse, quand les statuts et les méthodes immuables qui les gouvernent, leur commandent l'effroi du progrès? Oh! non, ce n'est pas dans l'état où se trouvent en ce moment les communautés religieuses, que l'éducation des femmes doit leur appartenir. Les coutumes y sont trop puériles et trop minutieuses; le temps y est trop largement dépensé en pratiques extérieures et surannées qui rendent l'esprit inactif, en formules décrépités, qui assoupissent le sentiment religieux plutôt que de le réveiller ou de le faire surgir; la vocation de l'enseignement est tenue de

chercher ailleurs sa force et sa lumière ; ce n'est pas non plus dans les méthodes et les préjugés ignorants des institutions actuelles que réside son avenir.

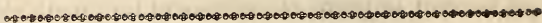
C'est à la puissance individuelle, à l'initiative libre et spontanée de l'intelligence agissant sur elle-même, à l'impulsion si morale et si active des mères qu'elle devra son essor plutôt qu'aux leçons vulgaires et à la lenteur des procédés usités dans les écoles publiques.

Frappé par la marche ascendante d'une raison et d'une maturité jusqu'alors inconnues à la majorité des femmes, chacun se mêle de seconder leur zèle en posant toutefois des limites à leur instruction : en voyant cette avidité de connaître et cet élan qui les anime, tout le monde s'empresse de travailler à leur élévation et à leur bonheur ; mais à condition de mesurer la somme d'idées compatibles avec leur complexion soi-disant naturelle.

L'éducation publique et celle des communautés religieuses ne sont pas plus près l'une que l'autre de croire que les femmes ont une valeur intellectuelle égale à celle des hommes ; elles ne savent offrir que des principes rétrécis aux nécessités de l'époque, aux besoins nouveaux de l'industrie qui exigent pour le bien-être matériel des femmes et pour leur moralité une instruction étendue et positive.

Mais l'enseignement maternel n'est pas contraint de se soumettre à ces doctrines arriérées qui barrent la route et endorment les facultés ; aussi je suis convaincue que c'est par lui que l'instruction des femmes produira les fruits les plus mûrs et les plus éclatants, parce que rien ne l'entrave et que bien mieux qu'un autre, il sait employer les heures. Vous verrez que partout où une femme se montrera avec distinction, occupera une position sociale où il faudra payer de sa personne et donner des preuves d'une supériorité de talent égale à celle des hommes, c'est plutôt à l'enseignement privé qu'il faudra l'attribuer.

Ainsi, l'instruction publique des femmes se montrera pendant longtemps encore faible et oiseuse. En attendant qu'elle s'assimile l'esprit d'association et la force morale dirigeante des communautés religieuses, en attendant qu'elle se régénère par les idées et la science nouvelles et qu'elle retrouve toute sa vigueur dans la puissance intellectuelle des femmes, sans laquelle on ne peut rien fonder de vaste en éducation, la suprématie appartiendra aux études indépendantes, à la volonté suprême guidée par l'influence des mères, jusqu'au jour où la société, ne pouvant plus se maintenir sans être raffermie par un lien moral unitaire, s'harmonisera encore avec la religion et rendra l'enseignement au sacerdoce.



LETTRE SIXIÈME.



VOCATION DES FEMMES ARTISTES.

Vous ne m'avez pas dit, Angélique, si vous étiez un peu remise de l'incursion prosaïque que je vous fis faire l'autre jour dans l'intérieur de nos classes noircies par l'encre et la poussière ; vous ne m'avez pas donné votre avis sur les remarques sévères et les remontrances rigides que je me suis permises envers nos jeunes maîtresses livrées à l'insouciance ou portées à l'aigreur. Au surplus , vous n'en êtes pas quitte à tout jamais, nous reviendrons plus d'une fois encore visiter nos tristes gymnases , véritables prisons de l'enfance, dans lesquels se retournent en mille postures les esclaves qu'on y apprivoise à la gêne ,

et où blanchissent avant l'âge les pauvres géoliers qui sont forcés de leur mesurer l'air et la liberté. Mais aujourd'hui je vais vous rendre plus joyeuse, je viens à vous avec un langage moins austère et d'un pas plus agile, pour vous parler de la vocation des femmes artistes, de cette vocation divine, au sentiment des Grecs; car vous vous rappelez l'ingénieuse fiction qu'ils en ont faite dans le mythe gracieux des neuf sœurs, ces belles et chastes filles auxquelles ils ont donné le nom de Muses, synonyme de pure mélodie, qui semble nous dire que les femmes sont appelées à conserver et à desservir le culte harmonieux des arts.

Il est inutile en effet de démontrer que la femme dont les goûts sont si délicats et si poétiques, l'âme si sensible et si suave, le caractère si sympathique à l'idéalité sainte de charité universelle, puisse atteindre aux sommités de l'art. Prise au point de vue philosophique et civilisateur, la vocation artiste fait partie du domaine de l'éducation publique, parce que l'art, religieux ou profane, est toujours l'enseignement le plus élevé et le plus attrayant que les peuples puissent recevoir. Je ne vois en conséquence aucun danger à ce que cette profession brillante soit accessible à un plus grand nombre de femmes, je suis certaine que telle que je la conçois, elle doit servir à leur moralité et à leur élévation

sociale, en contribuant à leur bien-être matériel; cette espérance est d'autant mieux fondée, que les femmes ne se livrent plus isolément, par essais ou par vanité prétentieuse, comme autrefois, à l'étude lente et difficile des arts, puisqu'ils sont à présent pour elles une carrière sérieuse et productive, dans laquelle on les voit en foule se complaire et réussir.

La littérature et la poésie, par exemple, ne sont-elles pas devenues trop familières aux femmes de notre époque, pour que Jean-Jacques osât encore écrire une sentence de réprobation pareille à celle-ci : « Toute fille lettrée restera fille toute sa » vie, quand il n'y aura que des hommes sensés » sur la terre? » Personne ne s'avise de croire à cette heure que le talent d'écrivain, de poète, exclut chez une femme les devoirs d'épouse et les sentiments de mère, ainsi que l'esprit d'ordre et les convenances du monde. Le type de l'artiste négligé, du génie inspiré, distrait et dédaigneux, qui s'isole avec affectation de la société, qui devient intraitable et repoussant à force d'originalité, s'est perdu par le ridicule dans l'un et l'autre sexe. Les souveraines du talent et de la science ressemblent à toutes les autres; ce sont aujourd'hui des femmes simples et naturelles comme toutes les femmes bien élevées. Toutefois, je me garderai bien de convier à la poésie la jeune fille sans fortune, qui a besoin de se créer

d'elle-même une existence douce et indépendante; c'est un état de luxe et de haute position sociale, qui est à peine profitable à quelques célébrités parmi les hommes. Néanmoins, je dirai à toute vocation poétique, qui ne peut résister à ce qu'on appelle le feu sacré, au penchant despotique et passionné qui la pousse dans une voie si hasardeuse, qu'il lui faudrait avoir toutes les cordes à sa lyre; les poésies sombres ou légères, les méditations harmonieuses qui n'empruntent pas les ailes de la mélodie, qui ne se mêlent pas aux accents du drame ou de la scène comique, pour se produire à la lumière, et recueillir au loin des couronnes, sont des œuvres sans profit et sans gloire, de frivoles passe-temps que l'indifférence dédaigne, ou que l'oubli dévore en un jour. Je dirai aussi aux femmes prosateurs, poètes, romanciers, dont les yeux d'Argus pénètrent les replis cachés de nos douleurs intimes, que Dieu et leur conscience sont les seuls juges de la mission qu'elles s'arrogent; mais il leur appartient de se rendre l'arbitre de leur habileté dans l'art. Si elles veulent mesurer la portée de leur vol, et roidir leur courage devant les obstacles, rien n'empêche qu'elles n'arrivent au premier rang des écrivains.

On voit chaque jour un grand nombre d'essais en ce genre devenir infructueux, pour n'avoir pas été assez mûrement réfléchis. Fasse le Ciel

que les femmes n'abandonnent jamais la chasteté dans leurs écrits, ni la délicatesse exquise des convenances, même au plus fort de leur imagination poétique ! Rien ne les force à faire usage de ces remèdes imprudents qui rouvrent des blessures presque cicatrisées, et les rendent mortelles en croyant les guérir. Mais dans l'alternative de dire trop ou trop peu sur ce point, dans l'impuissance de voiler l'abîme où tant d'esprits en vertige se précipitent par engouement, je me borne à conseiller le progrès de l'art ; c'est la beauté de la forme et la pureté du style qui me préoccupent le plus. J'aime à croire, dans ma sollicitude pour la vocation des femmes auteurs, que la nourriture vivifiante des hautes études, la sensibilité, le ferme vouloir qui produisent la majesté du talent et la richesse de la pensée, sont inséparables de la noblesse du caractère, et ne peuvent habiter que dans les âmes entourées d'une auréole sainte de dignité et de candeur. Après tout, ce ne sont pas seulement des bras de femmes, qui faiblissent en voulant présenter au monde le miroir de ses vices et de sa laideur. Entre tant de feuilles éphémères qui se consomment à recueillir des myriades de pensées, le temps seul connaît celle qui fait germer une vérité salutaire, mais il ne tient qu'à vous de savoir par les productions anciennes, dont la valeur a survécu à l'alliage impur des idées creuses et

fugitives de mode ou de circonstance, quelles sont les qualités d'exécution qui assurent à un ouvrage d'art le suffrage imposant de la postérité. J'ai cru les voir souvent dans l'expression naïve des sensations vivement éprouvées, dans la peinture richement colorée des passions ou des sentiments communs à tous les hommes et à toutes les époques; j'ai cru les reconnaître dans les œuvres où sont tracés à grands traits l'image et les mouvements invariables de l'esprit et du cœur, aussi bien dans les nuances délicates et les mâles contours de la beauté morale, que dans la recherche de l'infini, et l'imitation de la nature et de son unité.

L'art est le même dans tous les ouvrages humains; je n'aurai que des conseils à peu près semblables pour toutes les vocations artistes que je me propose d'examiner. Ce n'est pas moi qui m'aviserai de prononcer une parole de blâme et d'anathème contre les femmes qui consacrent aujourd'hui avec modestie et constance leurs facultés entières au service de l'art, mais j'insisterai toujours sur l'extrême sévérité des études; je ne cesserai d'exhorter à l'enthousiasme et au courage toute jeune fille qui se destine à cette vocation. Je chercherai à faire naître en elle le sentiment d'égalité qui peut l'élever au niveau des plus grands maîtres, parce qu'un talent supérieur, quelle que soit la multitude des rivalités

qui lui barrent la route, se fraie toujours un passage, et se prépare une position brillante. Sans cela, malgré l'attrait et les avantages matériels de la vocation des arts sur les autres états de femmes, je ne sais s'il serait prudent de les engager en plus grand nombre à choisir une profession où elles se trouvent si fort en concurrence avec les hommes déjà eux-mêmes si entassés dans cette voie.

Le livret des expositions solennelles de peinture contient un cinquième de noms féminins, qui, en plus d'un genre, se soutiennent avec honneur à côté des renommées masculines; dans la musique, on connaît la quantité prodigieuse de talents de femmes qui se font remarquer sur le principal instrument que l'usage leur ait permis de cultiver. Mais si dans l'un et l'autre de ces arts, elles sont inférieures en invention, si elles paraissent avec quelque apparence de raison peu familières avec les difficultés les plus grandes de la science, si elles sont inhabiles dans la composition, ou moins audacieuses et moins savantes que les hommes dans leur exécution, je suis fondée à croire que cela tient au préjugé qui les éloigne encore du sanctuaire le plus retiré de l'art, à la parole d'intimidation qui retentit sans cesse à leurs oreilles, et les empêche d'essayer avec audace, et de persister avec ténacité.

Comment se fait-il que ce ne soit que dans les arts où les femmes se présentent en rivalité avec les hommes, que leur infériorité se montre et se prolonge, tandis que dans l'art dramatique et celui du chant, où nul ne saurait les remplacer, elles peuvent à bon droit se poser avec assurance les égales des plus hautes célébrités parmi les hommes artistes ?

Je conviens qu'à beaucoup d'égards, dans le grand art de la peinture, des obstacles matériels s'opposent à ce que les femmes puissent user avec aisance des plus larges moyens d'exécution, et parviennent à construire de vastes machines, des scènes grandioses, pareilles aux œuvres merveilleuses que nous ont léguées Michel-Ange ou Paul-Véronèse. Mais la musique n'oppose pas les mêmes obstacles. D'où vient que tant de femmes promènent leurs doigts légers sur le piano avec une prestesse et une grâce si remarquables ? d'où vient qu'elles se rendent si habiles à lire la pensée des grands maîtres, et qu'elles ne savent ou n'osent pas se faire lire à leur tour en composant comme eux ? Pourquoi donc les femmes ne seraient-elles pas organisées musicalement comme les Beethoven et les Mozart ? pourquoi ne recèleraient-elles point au-dedans d'elles-mêmes ces mystérieuses modulations, ces symphonies, ces accords aux mille voix, qui redisent dans tous les accents les orages du cœur, les

sentiments secrets et les vagues rêveries de l'âme ?

Qu'est-ce donc que cette hésitation timorée qui les empêche de laisser éclater au dehors les sensations qui les agitent, si ce n'est un vestige de servage qui comprime encore leur esprit après avoir si longtemps comprimé leur corps ?

Croyez, si cela vous plaît, aux génies créateurs de naissance, aux dons privilégiés qui viennent d'en-haut plus rarement pour vous que pour les hommes ; mais de grâce ne vous arrêtez point au travail secondaire de lecteur et de copiste, sans avoir abordé de bonne heure et longtemps étudié les combinaisons de la science, qui enseignent à imiter, à traduire, et de là, conduisent à l'invention.

Dans notre époque laborieuse et mercantile, où l'industrie promène le niveau régulier qui jette la monotonie partout, les hommes ont plus besoin que jamais du luxe des fêtes et du contraste poétique et pittoresque des arts qui les distraient et les délassent de la lourdeur et du souci des affaires ; ces désirs d'émotion et d'idéalité, qui sont inextinguibles, assurent l'avenir de l'art, et font taxer au prix de l'or les grands talents.

Le charme distinct qui s'attache aux gracieuses créations des femmes, à leur style attrayant, à leur manière délicate et séduisante de sentir

et de pratiquer l'art, doit exciter de plus en plus l'émulation des femmes artistes. Leur carrière est moins épineuse que celle des hommes; les jeunes arbrisseaux peuvent croître et grandir au milieu d'elles, sans crainte d'être étiolés par la foule des grands chênes qui les font périr à l'ombre. Une longue suite de progrès à parcourir se déroule devant elles.

Il ne faut pas oublier, mon amie, que l'affranchissement intellectuel des femmes est une histoire de fraîche date; pour nous les arts, la poésie étaient naguère une science occulte dont les initiées comme de lumineux météores se montraient de loin en loin dans les cieux; voilà pourquoi il nous reste tant de contrées fertiles à explorer, tant de forêts vierges à défricher encore, là où les hommes ont promené depuis longtemps la cognée victorieuse, et frayé des chemins spacieux, battus et rebattus par le vulgaire.

A la faveur des idées récentes qui sont venues en leur temps, puisque Dieu l'a voulu ainsi, jeter sur les femmes un reflet nouveau d'égalité et de grandeur, un moment le monde a eu les yeux fixés sur elles, et ce ne sont pas des espérances vaines et des paroles sans portée, que celles qui sont assez puissantes pour attirer l'attention de tous. Au milieu des folles pensées et des conceptions extravagantes qui allèrent au-delà de toute sagesse et de toute tradition, il est resté en deçà

un esprit de justice et de bienveillance , des formes plus tolérantes qui ont fait crouler en un jour des préventions enracinées par les siècles.

Les ridicules attachés aux femmes savantes et toutes les satires qu'une moitié du genre humain prodiguait à l'autre , sont devenus des saillies de mauvais goût que la raison réprouve. Il n'est pas un des coups portés par la gravité des philosophes, quelle que soit la vérité qui les dirige, pas un trait aiguisé par la verve caustique des poètes contre la fragilité des femmes, qui ne saurait atteindre tout aussi justement le côté faible des hommes. Elles peuvent aujourd'hui sans craindre les regards du monde , ni redouter les sourires de pitié des censeurs, se vouer au culte des arts. Gardons-nous donc, lorsqu'une vocation fortement prononcée se présente, de la gêner dans son allure et de nous effrayer des conséquences fâcheuses de son développement. Le temps présent a des encouragements et des couronnes pour tous les talents de femmes sérieux et consistants ; le plus grand mal, à mon sens, c'est qu'il entraîne les jeunes filles artistes, qui sortent presque toutes de la classe laborieuse, à subir chaque jour l'ascendant des mœurs du luxe, à contracter des habitudes de distraction et des besoins d'aisance qui impriment le cachet de la faiblesse et de l'ambition hâtive aux résolutions d'où dépend leur avenir. Je suis loin de désirer, au surplus, que

l'enseignement des arts se propage en restant toujours superficiel comme il est forcé de l'être dans l'éducation générale des femmes ; je regarde ces puériles tentatives, ces simulacres d'études d'art, comme de précieuses dépenses de temps et d'argent qui pourraient être utilement employées à des connaissances indispensables que l'éducation de mode fait négliger ; j'écris principalement pour une classe qui doit bien se garder d'employer ses heures à faire des arts une distraction frivole et vaniteuse.

Je n'ai pas non plus le dessein de chercher à faire naître cette vocation parmi les jeunes filles qui la composent ; mais à toutes celles qui par position se déterminent sérieusement à suivre cette route, au grand nombre surtout qui s'y décide avec légèreté, je voudrais montrer de haut et faire prendre au sérieux une profession si éminente. On ne dira jamais assez à quelles épreuves de corps et d'âme, à quelles dures exigences de travail, il faut qu'elles se résignent pour conquérir les palmes du talent qui donnent la gloire et la richesse. On ne saurait trop répéter à toutes celles qui se sentent attirées par le côté brillant de cette carrière, qu'elles sont plus loin du succès que celles qui n'en voient que les fatigues, qui comptent les défaillances et les revers qu'il leur faudra subir avant d'arriver au but.

Vous vous étonnerez peut-être, mon amie, de me voir insister si souvent sur ces principes de force et d'abnégation personnelle; c'est que j'apprends chaque jour à mesurer la valeur du mot *progrès*. Une expérience lentement acquise me sépare de plus en plus du dogme illusoire de la perfectibilité; mon esprit se refuse à croire qu'on en a fini pour toujours avec les vertus stoïques et la constante résignation du passé, comme avec les rues tortueuses et les donjons de nos cités gothiques. Je tiens pour un des maux de notre époque cette croyance à la perfection individuelle, qui assimile la nature finie de l'intelligence et l'immutabilité de la conscience aux découvertes de la chimie et des forces mécaniques. Il en résulte une aveugle indifférence, un dédain pour les préceptes d'éternelle sagesse, qui paralysent l'éducation entière.

Frappé de la marche ascendante et des modifications rapides qui s'opèrent dans la nature des corps, on demande à l'esprit, au mouvement invariable du cœur et des passions les transformations successives que subit la matière; on croit que la perfection doit surgir en toutes choses du changement qu'on invoque sans relâche; et lorsqu'on aurait plus besoin que jamais de pratiquer cette vie pure et austère, source des grands talents seuls capables de nous placer au-dessus des rivalités innombrables, on se repose

sur la foi du progrès, sur les méthodes perfectionnées qui méprisent les études laborieuses et difficiles, sur les procédés ingénieux qui laissent des loisirs, favorisent l'inconstance et la paresse et propagent les médiocrités.

Cependant, pour s'élever bien haut dans les arts, les femmes, faibles et timides par caractère, doivent se soumettre plus forcément encore à ces principes sévères qui de tout temps ont formé les grands hommes. Il faut qu'elles renoncent à ces triomphes mesquins, à cette foule de courtisans dont se compose leur cortège, et qu'elles rejettent ces adulations mensongères qui les accoutument à se contenter de peu en effleurant toutes choses. Autant les femmes sans état, destinées à vivre paisibles et ignorées dans leur intérieur peuvent se former des occupations modestes, sédentaires et borner les limites de leur savoir; autant les femmes artistes ont besoin de la lumière et de l'indépendance d'une vie active et extérieure pour tout voir et tout apprendre. Leur condition est tout exceptionnelle; c'est une vocation distincte qui nécessite une direction spéciale. Ce n'est pas l'instruction parcimonieuse et l'étroitesse des vues dont on entoure les jeunes filles de la bourgeoisie qui sauraient la faire éclore, c'est encore moins les minauderies factices, les usages frivoles et les coutumes oisives des demoiselles de la haute classe; il lui

faut une atmosphère de franchise et de réalité.

Destinée à reproduire les richesses luxueuses de la nature, à refléter avec sincérité les nuances des mouvements accentués ou imperceptibles de l'âme, l'artiste, même enfant, a besoin de grandir à l'ombre de la liberté. Ne vous avisez donc pas d'ôter aux ressorts de son intelligence l'aisance et la spontanéité qui les font mouvoir ; car, indépendamment des longues années d'observations et de travail, elles sont nécessaires pour former une artiste consommée ; et si par hasard vous voulez vous garantir de l'appréhension que peut faire naître en vous une existence souvent disparate avec celle des autres femmes, songez que plus une artiste s'élève en talent, plus elle doit se montrer jalouse de sa dignité et sympathiser avec les principes les plus purs de dévouement et de haute moralité.

Nobles héritières que la fortune prend au berceau et conduit par le monde au doux bruissement des fêtes, vous qui ne connaissez de la vie, si amère pour le plus grand nombre, que des rêves capricieux et imaginaires formés dans les langueurs du repos et du bien-être, n'enviez pas les fleurs qu'on jette au front d'une artiste célèbre. Délicates et craintives, vous ne sauriez endurer les épines aiguës qui s'entre-mêlent au parfum de leurs vives couleurs. Votre enfance ne s'est point passée dans les pleurs à porter le fardeau grossissant des études rigoureuses ; vous ne

pourriez supporter plus tard les fatigues d'un travail sans fin, ces trances mortelles qu'il faut souffrir pour mériter toujours ces applaudissements qui enivrent l'âme, ces épreuves du savoir qu'il faut renouveler et agrandir sans cesse, si l'on veut conserver l'éclat de son nom et l'entendre résonner partout dans la foule comme une musique délicieuse.

Ainsi tout se compense et s'harmonise : si la suprématie du talent et de la gloire était un privilège de la naissance ou s'obtenait par la richesse, il ne resterait plus à la classe dépourvue de ces avantages que l'obscurité des états serviles ou la misère.

Mais grâce à Dieu, malgré les rigueurs qu'il impose à ses adeptes, l'art est accessible à tous : comme une religion sainte, il élève et ennoblit les fidèles admis dans son sanctuaire, et quelques-unes des joies qu'il procure suffisent pour racheter des années de labeur et de peines.

Douce consolation des âmes ardentes ou mélancoliques, la vocation des arts est une voix du Ciel qu'il faut écouter toujours ; c'est elle qu'on vit apparaître dès les premières impressions de madame Roland et qui devait répondre aux émotions profondes de son imagination fougueuse ; c'était sa flamme qui aurait fécondé l'existence de cette jeune enfant passionnée pour les livres, nourrie de visions poétiques et bercée sur les

genoux des artistes. Les connaissances de l'art que les préjugés de famille refusèrent à son éducation, eussent prolongé sa carrière et servi d'aliment à son cœur, tandis qu'en des jours de haine et de terreur la polémique violente des partis et les luttes ensanglantées moissonnèrent une aussi belle vie de femme au milieu de sa course.

Ainsi, de récente et triste mémoire, une élégante tige s'épanouirait peut-être en sa fleur, une jeune fille chaste et naïve cultiverait encore l'art de Phidias et de Cellini, si le sort funeste ne l'eût enlevée loin de sa patrie ; sans une vocation contraire peut-être la princesse Marie existerait encore heureuse d'animer le marbre et l'argile en peuplant son royal manoir de statuettes gracieuses qui souriraient à son bonheur.

Que ce soit par attrait ou par devoir, l'essentiel après tout, indépendamment de la persistance extrême des études, c'est que les femmes qui aspirent à la profession des arts aperçoivent la chaîne secrète qui les relie tous entre eux ; rien n'est plus dangereux au début d'une vocation, que d'abstraire l'intelligence et de la laisser s'absorber dans une spécialité unique sans lui ouvrir la vue des idées générales : c'est le regard scrutateur qui s'étend sur un vaste horizon, ainsi que la recherche incessante des analogies universelles, qui donnent à une artiste la profonde compréhension de l'art.

On aimerait à voir, comme dans les écoles anciennes, la palette du peintre et le burin du graveur illustrer à la fois des noms de femmes, comme ils illustrèrent ceux d'Albert Durer et de Rembrandt.

La composition musicale, la sculpture, l'éloquence et la poésie ont entre elles des affinités dont le passé a su saisir la valeur et recueillir l'utilité. Les artistes modernes, hommes ou femmes, ne cherchent pas assez à l'imiter sur ce point en se rendant également habiles dans plusieurs arts en même temps.

Quoi qu'il en soit, jamais les femmes ne se sont trouvées dans des conditions meilleures et entourées de plus de ressources pour compléter leur éducation artistique : aussi quelques-unes des supériorités réelles qui les honorent et la foule de talents remarquables qui se trouvent aujourd'hui dans leurs rangs donnent le droit d'être tout-à-fait exigeant sur leur compte. Elles doivent songer maintenant à produire des résultats qui rappellent que de grands maîtres les ont dès longtemps devancées dans la carrière. Je ne crains pas de leur répéter à satiété qu'elles ne peuvent invoquer une muse plus puissante que le vouloir et la constance. Dieu me garde de dire à toute intelligence de femme qu'elle n'est point d'une essence assez pure pour arriver à la conception de toutes choses ; trop de prophètes en manteau

d'hermine ont porté des jugements cruels qui reçurent d'éclatants démentis de l'avenir.

Je ne conseillerai pas plus à une jeune artiste de s'endormir mollement sur les dispositions brillantes qu'on remarque en elle, que de reculer devant les prédictions sinistres qui la condamnent à végéter toujours.

On trouve certains arts qui semblent exiger au premier abord des qualités physiques que la nature pourrait seule accorder ; eh bien ! pour ceux-là même, l'étude et l'artifice opèrent des miracles capables d'encourager les moins ferventes. Vous devinez, mon amie, celui des arts que j'ai principalement en vue dans ces dernières lignes. J'avouerai qu'il y a peut-être quelque étrangeté, pour ne pas dire hardiesse de ma part, à comprendre la profession dramatique dans l'éducation des femmes ; je n'ignore pas l'antique réprobation qui pendant si longtemps s'est appesantie sur cette vocation profane ; mais le temps, qui a fini par refroidir les foudres d'excommunication, comme les laves superposées du Vésuve, efface chaque jour les préjugés qui pèsent encore sur un art que Talma et Malibran se chargeraient seuls de réhabiliter et d'ennoblir.

Nous sommes déjà bien éloignés des jours rétrospectifs de la restauration, où M. de Bonald écrivait avec un purisme aveugle : « Il est noble

» de se dévouer à l'utilité publique, et ignoble de
» se vendre aux plaisirs du public; c'est ce qui
» fait que le titre d'homme public est un honneur,
» et celui de comédien un outrage. »

Tout en admirant l'art d'écrire du savant auteur de la *Législation primitive*, on ne peut se défendre d'un sentiment de répulsion, en remarquant l'outrecuidance d'un langage si brusquement hasardé : malgré ces anathèmes sonores, Dieu merci, nous en sommes au moins à la tolérance pour la profession dramatique; mais il y a loin de là encore à l'intérêt et aux enseignements moraux auxquels la jeunesse destinée à cette vocation est en droit de prétendre. Au lieu donc d'abandonner à elle-même comme on l'a fait jusqu'à présent, la classe nombreuse des femmes qui se vouent au théâtre, il me semble qu'il serait bien mieux de chercher à leur faire obtenir toute la considération que méritent leurs travaux et leur zèle.

Je n'essaierai pas d'envisager comment un art pareil pourrait devenir un des plus beaux états de femme. C'est une question qui seule demanderait un volume; cependant, mon amie, je ne puis terminer cette lettre sans vous avouer que tout en accordant aux actrices la liberté qui leur est indispensable, sans exiger d'elles des mœurs plus sévères que celles de la plupart des femmes du monde, je crois que leurs talents et leur fortune

ne n'auraient rien à perdre à la réforme de leur caractère, qu'il serait facile d'épurer par l'influence d'une éducation plus morale; il me semble que des femmes qui occupent une place importante dans la société par leur esprit et leur savoir, des femmes qui ont presque toutes reçu de Dieu le don de la beauté et de la grâce, en y joignant souvent l'attrait enchanteur d'une voix divine, devraient apprendre à rougir de profaner les charmes que le Ciel leur prodigue avec tant de largesse.

Il est naturel sans doute de viser à la richesse et à l'éclat que la possession d'un art procure; mais je ne puis penser que la plupart des artistes qui s'exercent chaque jour dans leur profession à rendre les plus délicates pensées du cœur, acceptent volontiers la tâche originelle qui les flétrit, en concourant elles-mêmes par leur conduite à l'agrandir encore.

Si j'osais élever la voix sur un sujet où nulle femme n'a seulement songé à porter les regards, je les conjurerais de rejeter loin d'elles ce langage familier de camaraderie voyageuse, ces termes du métier qui dénaturent leur goût et rabaissent leur jugement : sachant combien la vocation qui les met en évidence les expose aux séductions les plus périlleuses, ce ne serait point au nom des principes d'une raison simple et austère que je les supplierais de chercher à sanctifier

le privilège de leur indépendance; c'est au nom seul de l'art qui les glorifie que je les adjurerais de ne point descendre à d'indignes faiblesses dont les hommes eux-mêmes ne leur donnent jamais l'exemple; je leur demanderais quelle est cette ambition basse et cupide, qui leur fait croire que pour un peu plus d'or, des femmes d'un haut talent peuvent se condamner à courber la tête devant la fatuité corruptrice qui achète le droit de les mépriser; je chercherais à apprendre d'elles comment tout le luxe de la terre et tous les trésors du monde sauraient ajouter un rayon de grandeur, une seule pensée d'orgueil capable d'égaler ce que le succès sublime d'une inspiration heureuse leur procure d'enivrement et de bonheur.

C'est ainsi que je demanderais aux femmes que les grands succès de la scène ont éblouies, à celles que les préjugés du monde aveuglent à leur tour, pourquoi elles vont chercher une considération hors d'elles-mêmes en faisant l'échange d'un nom qu'elles ont illustré contre le nom titré d'une famille qui les dédaigne, au lieu de préférer l'union des hommes distingués par leur propre valeur.

Ce que je reprocherais enfin à quelques-unes des femmes qui se livrent à la plus belle et à la plus lucrative des professions, c'est l'égoïsme et la sécheresse qui souvent accompagnent une

réputation qui doit une partie de sa gloire aux élans généreux qu'elle a fait naître ; si j'enlevais aussi aux femmes artistes une susceptibilité excessive, un amour-propre étroit et irritable, si j'obtenais d'elles une instruction plus lettrée, plus étendue, j'en ferais des sujets admirés de tous ; on verrait alors les femmes les plus pures briguer l'honneur de la carrière dramatique, qui mieux que toutes les autres les élèverait aux yeux de la société entière, pour avoir ramené l'art théâtral à sa destination primitive en le faisant servir d'enseignement supérieur à l'éducation nationale.

Vous voyez bien , mon amie , qu'il faut que je m'arrête sur une question qui serait interminable comme tant d'autres , si l'on voulait en poursuivre les développements infinis ; je reviendrai sur cette matière en d'autres chapitres ; je sens au bout de ma longue course que la lassitude me gagne. Pour terminer ce qui concerne les professions de femmes, je tâcherai, dans ma prochaine lettre, d'envisager la vocation religieuse.

Au revoir, bonne Angélique , les jours clairs et prolongés, leur ravissante parure, plus propice au travail et à l'expansive amitié, me font espérer que votre réponse ne se fera pas longtemps attendre.

LETTRE SEPTIÈME.

VOCATION RELIGIEUSE.

Éternel, incarné en nous, le sentiment religieux jamais ne tarit sa source, il revêt à travers les âges toutes les formes nécessitées par le besoin et les lumières du temps. Ce n'est pas seulement un souffle intérieur qui se borne à murmurer au fond d'une âme élue, les sons limpides de Dieu et d'infini, c'est un cri d'enthousiasme et d'amour qui retentit avec éclat dans les plus nobles cœurs.

Quand les nations s'affaissent et succombent sous la main desséchée de l'égoïsme et du doute, c'est son inspiration divine qui, en des jours marqués par la providence, les régénère par la sainte parole de charité universelle; c'est son dogme sacré qui commande l'union et la félicité

de tous, attire à lui les plus aimants pour les associer comme des frères, en leur donnant la grande tâche des vocations religieuses.

Les temps les plus reculés nous redisent les lueurs prophétiques, qui animèrent aussi les femmes appelées à compléter cette œuvre incessante. Rien n'interrompt dans les siècles la somme de sacrifices et de pieuses résignations qu'elles s'imposèrent pour concourir à cette grande pensée d'association religieuse des peuples; partout où les hommes ont laissé des traces de culte et de sacerdoce, partout où ils se sont réunis pour faire une œuvre commune d'enseignement et de prières, les femmes n'ont pas tardé à se précipiter sur leurs pas, afin de suivre ou de surpasser leur zèle.

L'antiquité eut ses prêtresses et ses sibylles écrivant leurs livres sacrés ou proférant leurs oracles; quand Rome abaissait les faisceaux consulaires devant ses vestales, et leur accordait en retour d'un vie chaste et dévouée, le droit sublime de faire grâce aux criminels qui se trouvaient sur leur passage; la Gaule recevait de ses druidesses le sentiment frénétique du courage belliqueux, qui excitait ses peuplades barbares à défendre avec héroïsme le sol sacré de la patrie.

C'est en partie pour répondre aux accents religieux issus de la foi chrétienne, que le mot de

vocation fut créé; l'impulsion première de la vie ascétique et religieuse qui prit naissance vers le milieu du troisième siècle de notre ère, fut produite par un ébranlement profond des choses morales, un dégoût mélancolique pour les tristes réalités du monde païen. On sait que l'état monastique fut fondé par quelques hommes épris des croyances nouvelles et guidés par cette parole de l'Écriture : « Si vous voulez être parfaits, allez, vendez ce que vous avez, donnez-le aux pauvres, et vous aurez un trésor dans le ciel; ensuite venez, et suivez-moi. »

Quoique ce fût un mouvement de salut personnel, une sainte ardeur d'aspiration céleste qui entraîna également les femmes à embrasser le genre de vie monastique, sous l'apparence d'une vocation individuelle et égoïste, les communautés religieuses qui se multipliaient au sein de la chrétienté, eurent une haute portée civilisatrice; les soupirs étouffés qui s'exhalèrent du fond des cloîtres profitèrent longtemps à la cause de l'humanité en général et à celle des femmes en particulier.

Durant les mauvais jours du moyen-âge, au moment où une société renaissante se constituait, les femmes trouvèrent dans les couvents un asile assuré contre la violence et les iniquités d'alors. C'est là qu'elles vinrent s'initier au milieu d'une famille spirituelle aux premières no-

tions de la science, et conquérir les principes d'égalité que la famille corporelle était impuissante à leur donner.

Si les règles austères et surnaturelles de l'existence claustrale n'avaient eu d'autre portée que de montrer aux plus enthousiastes le séjour terrestre comme une vallée de misère et de larmes qu'il fallait se hâter de quitter au plus vite, si la vocation religieuse n'avait eu d'autre fin que d'entraîner les âmes ardentes à dépouiller leur enveloppe grossière et de les préparer à la dernière heure qui devait, disait-on, sonner prochainement pour tous; tant d'épreuves cruelles n'eussent été qu'un rêve amer, un mensonge affreux, pareil à ceux des sectaires homicides et forcenés, qui, dans leur délire, abrutissent leur âme en mutilant leur corps. Sans la grande vue moralisante et charitable qui dominait ces pratiques délétères, les résolutions extrêmes qui poussèrent une multitude de jeunes filles à fuir le monde et à fouler aux pieds tout ce qui porte ici-bas le nom de bonheur, n'auraient été que des tentatives partielles et infructueuses, et les fondations monastiques, au lieu de pulluler partout et de s'enraciner dans les siècles, auraient passé comme des institutions éphémères que le moindre obstacle eût renversées sans retour : mais la vocation religieuse put se produire avec ses formes austères et ses ramifications lointaines,

parce qu'elle portait en elle les germes de vertus sociales et les principes d'association qui la soutiennent encore ; elle dut se propager et grandir, parce qu'elle était semée sur un sol végétatif qui sans doute attendait sa culture.

Les Communautés religieuses, sainte milice de l'église chrétienne, purent imposer le joug pesant du Seigneur aux vierges fidèles et les condamner à une réclusion perpétuelle, elles purent étouffer jusqu'au dernier souffle de leur spontanéité dans les étreintes d'une cellule oppressive, sans abdiquer comme corporation la liberté d'agir sur le monde extérieur, sans renoncer à la gloire de travailler avec leur discipline et leur savoir à la grande sociabilité des peuples. Longtemps la religieuse prit part à cette gloire en partageant ses vœux pleins de tendresse entre le ciel et la famille universelle ; longtemps son esprit et son cœur s'échappèrent au dehors des murailles sacrées pour écouter le bruit des louanges et des conquêtes de son divin époux sur la terre, heureuse de rencontrer en foule des cœurs à l'unisson du sien et des esprits animés de la même espérance. Elle ne posa de barrière entre le monde et elle que pour ramener sa pensée tout entière de Dieu à tous ses frères, et de tous ses frères à Dieu, en repoussant toute distraction comme une tentation dangereuse, et lorsqu'on la voyait lutter

dans une méditation aussi corrosive que le si-moon enflammé du désert, lorsqu'elle jetait son voile épais comme un linceul sur toutes les joies mondaines, c'était afin de puiser dans la prière et dans l'extinction des attachements antérieurs les tressaillements de pitié et d'amour pour les malheureux privés de pain et de consolation, que sa foi lui ordonnait de soulager à toute heure.

Le génie puissant des conciles en appelant les femmes aux professions religieuses, en leur disant de quitter la maison paternelle pour venir habiter de sombres et silencieuses demeures, s'adressait aux plus riches et aux plus nobles damoiselles, aussi bien qu'aux plus humbles et aux plus pauvres vassales. Il commandait de couvrir d'un voile aussi obscur les vêtements de soie et d'or que les haillons de la misère, afin que dans la famille nouvelle qu'il confiait au giron de l'Église, l'abbesse constituée reine et maîtresse du troupeau timide, pût distinguer, comme une mère juste et tendre, ses filles bien-aimées d'après l'élévation de l'âme et la bonté des actions, et non d'après l'éclat du rang et les privilèges de la naissance.

Il est certain que les femmes trouvèrent au couvent une égalité plus indépendante et plus intellectuelle que cette égalité confuse et ignorante dont l'esclavage avait fait peser si long-

temps le niveau sur leur tête; elles vinrent chercher là un refuge contre un monde brutal et licencieux qui les meurtrissait encore de ses chaînes; affranchies de la domination despotique et omnipotente des époux, maîtres sévères et absolus qui les voulaient soumises jusqu'à la servilité, elles offrirent un spectacle inconnu à la terre, celui de femmes qui s'associaient selon une hiérarchie fondée sur leur mérite, et la liberté commençait pour elles, puisque pour elles cessait l'infériorité originelle, et que leur foi, leur sagesse et leurs œuvres imposaient sur leur front voilé du chaste bandeau un caractère de dignité et de grandeur qui les élevait aux yeux de l'humanité entière.

Ainsi s'était transformée et étendue sur une vaste échelle, la vocation religieuse des femmes, qu'on avait vue déjà morale et majestueuse, mais trop restreinte, dans l'institution des vestales romaines.

Lorsqu'un jour l'histoire voudra poursuivre la trace de l'existence ancienne et universelle des femmes, dans toutes ses ramifications, en lui rendant l'animation réelle du mouvement et de la couleur, elle sera forcée d'assigner une large place aux périodes diverses de leur carrière religieuse; elle fera voir en ces temps d'enthousiasme, de célestes figures et de nobles actes qui remplissent la scène d'accents géné-

reux et purs; sa voix éloquente redira l'exaltation éclairée, la sensibilité d'âme, l'intensité extrême des instincts de chasteté naturelle à notre sexe, qui depuis l'ère chrétienne ont produit, même au milieu du fanatisme crédule et de l'ignorante rudesse, une multitude de femmes célèbres par leur stoïcisme et leur douce moralité. Elle montrera la religieuse au centre des affaires de l'église et du cloître principalement, qui formaient la vie essentielle du moyen-âge, prenant un rôle actif et important dans lequel on la voit déployer un dévouement inaltérable et une supériorité dirigeante extraordinaire.

Les noms révéérés des saintes Radegonde, Bathilde, Claire, Hildegarde, Catherine de Sienne, Thérèse et Marmion viendront briller sur les mêmes phylactères qu'entourent les auréoles des saints Antoine, Augustin, Benoît, Bruno, Bernard, Charles Borromée et Vincent de Paul; ils orneront les saints portiques de l'église militante et zélatrice de la civilisation d'alors.

A cette époque où toutes les conditions étaient chancelantes, où la société semblait flotter incertaine entre la vie libre et séculière et la vie associée et commune, où tous les cœurs paraissaient aspirer aux choses nouvelles et laissaient voir des traces de cette mélancolie triste et découragée qui assombrit si fort notre siècle, qui pourrait dire que ce ne fut pas une mission expresse

et progressive, que cette participation des femmes au grand travail humanitaire qui s'accomplissait en ce temps-là dans le monde ?

Aussi, quelle que soit la critique que la raison m'oblige à faire des phases ultérieures de la vocation religieuse des femmes, je me garderais bien de rien répudier de tout ce qui concerne leur intervention dans les choses d'en-haut ; parce qu'il en est du royaume des cieux comme du monde spirituel : on ne peut rien régler dans l'ordre céleste, qui ne concerne l'administration de la terre ; ni rien résoudre sur les destinées de l'âme, qui ne rejaillisse forcément sur la vie du corps.

En voyant avec quelle intelligence et quelle ferveur les femmes répondirent autrefois à l'appel religieux qui leur fut fait par les hommes les plus éminents et les plus sages, composant la hiérarchie si active et si savante du vieux catholicisme, nous ne devons rien préjuger ni rien exclure des secours inattendus, des rayons lumineux de grâce divine qui pourraient jaillir encore en elles, si jamais le monde prêt à se ruer sur lui-même et à se précipiter dans le gouffre béant de toutes les croyances éteintes, avait recours à leur influence pacifique et religieuse pour l'associer et le relier encore selon les vues rédemptrices de Dieu.

Quoi qu'il en soit, en ne considérant les révolu-

tions successives de la carrière religieuse des femmes, que sous le rapport philosophique, on est forcé de convenir que son développement à travers les siècles nombreux du christianisme embrasse une sphère vaste et féconde dans leur vie intellectuelle et sociale.

Ces œuvres communes, si multipliées, si élevées dans leur but, ces jeûnes, ces austérités, ces contemplations rêveuses et solitaires, ne furent pas perdus pour leur avenir terrestre; tant d'efforts surhumains, tant d'épreuves accablantes supportées par des générations entières de femmes, ont exhaussé leur caractère aux yeux des hommes.

Ces âmes exaltées et excentriques qui délaissaient la réalité pour courir après une espérance vacillante en son beau jour, et terrible en sa douteuse lueur, ont grandement servi les destinées d'ici-bas, en croyant souvent n'agir que pour la vie future. Ces charitables fondatrices, ces abbeses vigilantes et capables qui servirent de modèles aux maîtresses femmes si actives et si industrieuses, qu'on vit plus tard devenir la tête et le bras des familles, ne sont-elles pas l'honneur de l'humanité? N'effacez rien des faits et gestes de ces saintes filles, éprises de nobles passions inconnues du vulgaire; leurs noms entassés même dans les légendes les plus obscures ne sont-ils pas de glorieux trophées élevés par l'esprit d'as-

sociation religieuse qui harmonise et qui console ? Ne sont-ils pas des palmes conquises sur le matérialisme étroit et glacé qui désunit et désespère ?

Quand la pensée se reporte à ces époques de foi unanime où le fluide religieux coulait à pleins bords et donnait aux ordres monastiques cette vive chaleur qui ranimait et propageait leur existence, on devine aisément que le choix des vocations devenait facile et pouvait se constater avec une certitude rassurante ; les préoccupations du monde, les habitudes dévotieuses, les observances rigides, exactes et minutieuses, qui se pratiquaient au sein des familles, l'influence, le bruit, l'éloge partout répété des monastères s'offraient en aide aux vœux des novices, l'impression des premiers âges, l'éducation mystique et l'entourage des jeunes vierges, tout venait réveiller et raffermir les vues électives de Dieu sur elles, et tout fait présumer aussi qu'on dut rarement rencontrer alors des vocations forcées ou trompeuses.

Mais lorsqu'en sa période décroissante le dogme catholique fut traversé par l'esprit de doute et d'examen qui engendra la réforme démolissante, lorsque surtout le monachisme, se faisant envahisseur et ambitieux, favorisa l'orgueil et la cupidité féodale dans l'exercice du droit d'aînesse, les vocations devinrent périlleuses et fragiles.

Dès que le scepticisme railleur, l'esprit nouveau se glissant dans les livres et s'infiltrant au foyer domestique, ébranlèrent les saintes doctrines jusqu'en leurs fondements et refroidirent l'ardeur des fortes convictions, la voix du sacrificateur, du prêtre, dut souvent trembler à l'instant solennel qui consacrait la victime et enlevait au monde une existence que le monde avait forcément préparée pour lui. Comment pouvaient-ils ne pas hésiter et frémir à la pensée de prendre une jeune fille élevée dans un milieu très-peu mystique et faiblement religieux, pour l'enlever aux idées saines, à l'air tempéré d'une société plus douce qui souriait à son avenir, et l'entraîner vivante au séjour des morts, en la livrant aux pratiques et aux règles de fer destinées à d'autres fins et mesurées pour des cœurs inébranlables en leur croyance ?

Si la loi de transformation qui régit l'univers ne nous était révélée, si le passé laissant partout des ruines ne déposait en mourant des germes de renaissance que l'avenir vient féconder toujours, on regretterait amèrement ces vastes institutions qui s'éteignent dans l'inaction et le silence ; on se lamenterait à l'aspect de tant d'idées saintes et sublimes, si laborieuses et si conquérantes, qui s'émoussent en vieillissant et ne laissent après elles qu'ambitions énervées et coutumes oiseuses ; mais rien ne meurt : n'est-il pas vrai,

mon amie, tout n'est que déplacement ou transfiguration ?

Il y a un principe, vous le savez, Angélique, bien plus vrai que toutes les certitudes fictives qui échappent sans cesse à nos investigations. Ce principe, c'est le mouvement qui se perpétue dans l'infini : en lui réside l'existence universelle ; à son aspect, la science devrait appréhender de fermer les cercles nombreux qu'elle trace, et la sagesse qui harmonise et qui ordonne devrait redouter d'emprisonner la liberté humaine dans l'étroite enceinte des formes immobiles. Sans doute ils eurent leur attrait et leur gloire, ces jours d'union et d'espérance qui éclairaient l'ardeur généreuse et la foi vive du moyen-âge. En ce temps où l'Église, pour accomplir ses grands desseins, s'appuyait sur le bras fort des cénobites, la profession religieuse pouvait se propager alors avec sa fougue première et se maintenir dans toute sa rigueur.

Quand il s'agissait de cultiver dans l'âme des chastes recluses les préceptes et les exemples qui devaient servir de lumière à toutes les femmes, le zèle des néophytes put conserver à la perpétuité des vœux leur sérénité originelle. Tant que les abbayes persistantes, infatigables ruches établies au milieu des bois, groupèrent autour d'elles ces essaims d'artisans et de laboureurs qui les aidaient dans leurs exploitations importantes,

tant que ces cohortes saintes furent ainsi affairées à conquérir le monde en défrichant le sol et polissant les peuples, le véhicule d'utilité sociale qui les tenait en haleine, dissimula souvent le vice fondamental des vocations en elles-mêmes; mais à mesure que les sociétés religieuses communiquèrent la vie civilisée aux populations séculières, le souffle vital s'affaiblissait et s'éteignait au milieu d'elles.

A mesure que le cloître transplantait ou multipliait ses voussures, il était forcé de s'occuper à resserrer ou à reconstruire le faisceau de ses règles primitives; il est facile de démêler, dans les moindres velléités de réformes qui s'opérèrent au sein des communautés religieuses, le ver rongeur qui les minait continuellement par la base. Ces abus sans cesse répétés, ces vicissitudes renaissantes qui attaquèrent tant de célèbres fondations au moment de leur prospérité la plus grande, en sont une preuve convainquante. Les répulsions suscitées partout contre les ordres monastiques, le cri général de réprobation qui fut jeté enfin par la majeure partie de la chrétienté même, indépendamment des causes extérieures qui le provoquèrent, dérivait d'un mal interne et radical, et ce mal ne fut autre que l'erreur profonde qui donna une perpétration immuable au mode défectueux qu'on a encore de constater et d'édifier les vocations.

Cette erreur consista dans l'idée qu'on s'était faite de les considérer *ab anteriori* comme éternelles et prédisposant fatalement de la destinée temporaire. C'était là une faute capitale qui produisit deux conséquences funestes que le temps fut loin d'affaiblir.

La première conduisit à croire qu'il était inutile de compter l'âge des néophytes, marquées du signe d'élection : cette confiance était une imprudence horrible, car elle ne tenait aucun compte du temps qui change, comme on sait, les sensations, les goûts et les tempéraments, et par cela seul modifie singulièrement le caractère d'innéité et d'invariabilité qu'on attribuait aux vocations religieuses.

La deuxième conséquence est celle qui fit prendre pour une pierre de touche infaillible la puissance momentanée du milieu où se préparait le noviciat. Une si grande crédulité rendait même peu exigeant sur la durée des épreuves qu'on faisait subir aux novices : « Le monde n'a » exigé que trop de temps pour les réflexions et les » épreuves, leur disait Massillon, vous étiez mûres pour la vie religieuse, les premiers jours » que la grâce vous inspira la résolution de vous » y consacrer. » Et au lieu de préparer dès l'enfance les jeunes vierges aux habitudes constantes de modestie, de pureté, de désintéressement et d'obéissance, on prenait des caractères tout

formés, des jeunes personnes nourries et abreuvées par les idées du monde, dans l'âge où l'espérance a des ailes, où les rêves sont si rians et si mobiles; et l'on croyait, après quelques mois d'attente, avoir sondé les mystérieuses profondeurs de l'âme, on se figurait pouvoir effacer au cœur des nonnes pieuses les impressions d'une éducation première, et séparer le passé de l'avenir comme on tranchait la longue et belle chevelure qui servait d'ornement à leur visage; sur des indices aussi fragiles, on ne craignait pas de faire contracter des engagements indissolubles, on prononçait des arrêts terribles sur l'enthousiasme d'un jour qui s'éteignait souvent au réveil du lendemain, en jetant sur une vie entière le désespoir et la douleur.

C'est à peine si une telle témérité eût été pardonnable à l'origine de la vie monastique, car il suffit de porter les regards vers les époques les plus prospères de la profession religieuse, pour voir que les pasteurs de l'Église ou *seniores* poussèrent vainement devant eux ces troupeaux d'âmes exaltées en les animant de cette parole qui opérait les conversions des premiers temps; ils ne furent pas toujours capables de les défendre même sous les verroux et sous les grilles contre les pièges et les exemples de la vie ordinaire, qui est essentiellement mondaine et entichée de bonheur terrestre.

En effet , malgré les fortes impressions qu'on faisait éprouver , malgré les préceptes sévères qu'on inoculait avec tant de ferveur, on se voyait contraint sans cesse de subir l'ascendant de la nature et des inclinations premières ; à toute heure on pouvait se convaincre , par les réactions violentes qu'on s'efforçait d'anéantir , qu'on avait non-seulement posé des règles exceptionnelles et impossibles, mais que souvent on faisait des appels dangereux et sacrilèges en plaçant une foule d'existences dans une condition où l'on ne pouvait les maintenir qu'à l'aide des châtimens et de la terreur. C'est avec un sentiment de tristesse qu'on envisage ces troupes nombreuses de chastes filles livrées ainsi aux tortures des scrupules ou de la frayeur, en butte aux tentations sataniques qui les obsèdent. C'est pitié de voir tant de frêles et douces créatures succomber si jeunes sous les accès fébriles des hallucinations extatiques qui les consomment, et l'on conçoit aussi que les esprits dûrent finir par se révolter en voyant ajouter aux jeûnes, à la discipline et aux privations de sommeil, déjà si austères, ces *minutions* périodiques moins ostensibles , mais plus cruelles encore, qui étouffaient les sombres regrets et le dernier cri de résistance au cœur des pauvres recluses.

Cependant le moyen-âge a disparu , cette foi brûlante qui tourmentait les solitaires n'existe

plus, la religieuse ne traverse plus le cloître pour courir au désert, altérée de cette soif du néant que rien ne peut assouvir; elle ne macère plus son corps pour dégager son âme et rompre d'un élan rapide les liens qui la retiennent à la terre; au milieu d'une société qui a changé de face, la vocation religieuse n'est plus la même : ses chaînes sont moins pesantes, mais on ne rencontre plus en elle les éléments qui la faisaient croître et grandir dans sa force et dans sa libre spontanéité. C'en est fait ! le couvent n'a plus d'autre œuvre à remplir que le soin de son ambition privée, d'autre gloire que sa prospérité particulière : la vie claustrale se consume en contemplations stériles, et l'on commence à se demander pourquoi ces vœux si austères ? pourquoi cette autorité toujours plus despotique, et ces grands biens qui s'accumulent sans cesse ?

On découvre pour les déterminations qui conduisent au monastère, comme pour les relations qui attachent au monde, des motifs apparents et des raisons frivoles. Partout on parle de vocations surprises ou contraintes ; on dirait même que la parole des prédicateurs préparant les vêtures est pleine de circonlocutions et d'art ; autrefois elle s'éprenait d'admiration pour le saint enthousiasme des chastes filles qui se vouaient au service de Dieu, elle tempérerait leur zèle ; à ce moment, elle aiguillonne leur foi, et cherche à

les prémunir contre les influences pernicieuses et les souvenirs séduisants du monde. Écoutez l'éloquent évêque de Clermont inspirant le mépris du siècle aux jeunes vierges qu'il catéchise.

« Hélas ! » dit-il, « si vous connaissiez le fond » et l'intérieur de ce monde misérable , si vous » pouviez entrer dans les détails secrets de ses » soucis et de ses noires inquiétudes ; si vous pou- » viez percer cette première écorce qui n'offre » aux yeux que joie , que plaisirs , que pompe et » que magnificence ; que vous le trouveriez dif- » férent de ce qu'il paraît ! Vous n'y verriez que » des malheureux : le père divisé d'avec l'en- » fant, l'époux d'avec l'épouse ; le frère dresser » des embûches au frère , l'ami se défier de son » ami ! etc. etc. »

Ce noir tableau du monde était donc devenu nécessaire à la tiédeur et aux fréquents retours des novices vers les séductions du siècle. Massillon continue encore avec ces nuances délicates et cette puissance du grand orateur et du profond moraliste en parlant de ces maisons religieuses infortunées.

« Où le premier esprit est tombé, où la régu- » larité ne s'observe plus : c'est là où se trouvent » en grand nombre des vierges infidèles, mécon- » tentes et malheureuses de leur état , portant » le reste de joug avec une tristesse et une répu- » gnance qui accablent ; plus elles conservent de

» liaisons et de confraternité avec le monde, plus
» la religion leur paraît triste et affreuse !... Quel-
» les sont les amertumes d'une vierge infidèle que
» le monde a séduite et qui voit ses penchants
» mondains renfermés pour toujours dans le saint
» lieu ! elle traîne partout ses dégoûts et son in-
» quiétude ; les rigueurs d'une sainte discipline
» deviennent pour elle un fardeau qu'elle ne peut
» plus porter ; elle ne trouve plus dans le secret
» du sanctuaire d'autre plaisir que dans les fan-
» tômes qu'une imagination déréglée lui retrace,
» et la prière n'est plus pour elle qu'une con-
» trainte ou un tumulte d'images profanes qui
» s'offrent en foule à son esprit, etc., etc. »

Aux éclatantes couleurs, à l'étude minutieuse du cœur humain dans ses replis les plus cachés, on sent que la vocation religieuse a besoin d'une voix souple et suave pour attirer à elle ; on croit comprendre qu'elle n'était déjà plus qu'une aspiration au repos individuel ou un intérêt d'opulente famille.

En voyant l'illustre prélat tracer la nouvelle existence des demoiselles de distinction que le dépit, l'ambition, ou la contrainte amène pour la plupart au couvent, on s'aperçoit qu'il ne s'agit plus de songer à fixer la volonté d'une seule pour former dans l'esprit de toutes la solidarité d'une noble et vaste entreprise ; il n'est plus question de grands travaux, d'hospitalité ni de frappants

exemples de vertus sociales : la civilisation s'est déjà pourvue ailleurs ; la condition religieuse n'est plus pour les femmes qu'une manière d'être, un usage où les arrangements privés prédominent ; le cloître est devenu l'asile de la noblesse ou de la haute bourgeoisie : c'est ce qui fait dire si malicieusement à La Bruyère « qu'il s'est » trouvé des jeunes filles qui avaient de la vertu, » de la santé, de la ferveur et une bonne vocation, mais qui n'étaient pas assez riches pour » faire dans une RICHE abbaye vœu de PAUVRETÉ. »

La vocation religieuse ne se prolonge pas moins avec ses principes rigoureux et ses doctrines invariables, mais elle a perdu le sens de sa destinée d'autrefois ; les corporations sont toujours étendues et florissantes, grâce à leurs richesses inaliénables, mais le sacrifice qu'elles exigent encore a perdu sa grandeur, parce qu'il s'est amoindri dans son but. Depuis longtemps le caractère de libre élection pour le choix des abbesses, qui donnait à l'état religieux un gage de sécurité et d'émulation immense, a disparu ; la superbe monarchie de Louis XIV a jeté son manteau de pourpre et de domination sur le cloître comme partout ; l'étiquette guindée, infatuée d'élégance et de bonnes manières, a pénétré jusqu'au parvis du chœur et porté la distraction des futilités mondaines dans les habitudes du couvent, comme ailleurs. La vie dévote, remplie

de pratiques superficielles et mesquines, a remplacé le sentiment profond de religiosité qui caractérisait la foi antique; cette chaleur de conviction indépendante en son essor, cette hardiesse d'inspiration qu'on vénérât dans les femmes appelées à la profession religieuse, aurait choqué les formes compassées du grand siècle : le couvent n'a que faire d'élévation, d'entraînement et d'amour fraternel, « pour ces devoirs glacés » qu'on y remplit avec une exactitude où il entre » plus de petitesse que de vertu ¹. »

C'était peu avant cette quiétude indolente qui avait envahi la carrière religieuse, qu'était apparu Vincent de Paul, et déjà le saint homme de Dieu, s'emparant du véritable esprit chrétien qui semblait empreint de rudesse aux délicates et nobles demoiselles réunies dans les monastères, avait demandé aux filles du peuple l'enseignement des pauvres, les soins doux et patients prodigués aux malades et aux infirmes; il avait enlevé au couvent ce qui faisait sa gloire aux yeux des hommes; la charité n'attendait plus les malheureux à la porte de ces saintes demeures, car la vierge simple et active écartait son voile et brisait ses fers pour porter la parole de consolation et le pain de l'aumône au domicile de la misère.

¹ Massillon.

Survienne ensuite ce règne bizarre, épris d'envivantes frivolités, et la cellule, toute retirée qu'elle soit, ne cachera pas l'ignorance gracieuse et les secrets entretiens de fadeurs et de loisirs des grands du monde qui se murmurent au cloître ; il n'y aura pas un livre d'historiettes à la mode qui n'ait son enlèvement et sa tourière, pas un bruit de galante aventure qui n'ait son coup d'épée entre gentilshommes rivaux, donné à la clarté furtive de la lune, sous les hautes murailles du couvent romanesque.

Vous le voyez, la profession monastique est plongée dans ces *graves riens*, ces *mystiques vétilles* qui inspirent la verve pétillante du chantre de Vert-Vert. Après ce coup mortel du ridicule porté sur un état si justement respecté, on doit s'attendre à voir profaner et détruire le saint asile, comme tout ce qui faisait obstacle à la marche torrentueuse du siècle ; mais la violence, qui renverse toujours sans savoir de quelle sorte on pourrait édifier, s'expose à subir des réactions victorieuses ; nous vîmes tous comment fut restauré l'état religieux : il ne pouvait mieux faire que de revêtir la gravité de notre époque.

Quoi qu'il en soit, que peut-on attendre de lui à cette heure ? n'est-il pas à présumer que, semblable à toutes les institutions vieilles et recrépites, il ne pourra reflourir qu'à la condition de se transformer ?

Précaire et dépendant de la mobilité des lois séculières, le couvent n'est plus construit que sur le sable; on se demande quelle est son utilité pour la civilisation et pour les femmes elles-mêmes dans le présent. Si on considère la tendance des mœurs et l'état des croyances, on est forcé de convenir que les corporations dénuées de générosité et faibles de savoir sont une anomalie pour notre temps; et cependant telle est la valeur extrême du principe qui les unit, que par la simple tolérance d'exister comme congrégations, de pouvoir utiliser les ressources de la vie commune, par la seule liberté qu'elles ont d'accumuler en main-morte les dots qu'elles reçoivent, elles augmentent chaque jour leur prospérité matérielle et prennent une influence de corps et de fortune qui ne peut manquer de grossir les embarras et les mécontentements de la société actuelle.

On connaît l'instinct envahisseur des communautés religieuses, on sait qu'elles présentent un réseau qui tend à s'agrandir outre mesure, personne n'ignore qu'elles aspirent à placer l'enseignement des femmes sous la tutelle chancelante de leurs codes rétrogrades; et partout, excepté dans l'œuvre admirable de saint Vincent de Paul, la vocation monastique n'est plus que l'ombre d'elle-même; sa passion dominante est l'amour de la propriété; son stimulant le plus

vif, un sentiment de haine contre l'instruction séculière; c'est l'esprit du corps ancien, mais hostile et dégénéré, avec sa domination et ses regrets, harcelant l'esprit nouveau qui, désuni, morcelé, entouré de gêne, est à la merci de toutes les perplexités, mais se propage quand même, plein de vigueur et d'avenir.

Méprisant le monde et ne faisant plus rien pour lui, la profession religieuse est réduite à l'égoïsme du célibat. Bien abritée, bien prônée, bien étayée, au lieu d'être dévouée et compaissante, pour remplir ses vues étroites et travailler à son agrandissement, elle lutte et triomphe souvent par des moyens que la justice et la bonté réprouvent. C'est surtout à l'intérieur de nos provinces qu'elle fait une guerre cruelle aux établissements dirigés par des femmes d'un vrai mérite, dont le travail persévérant et le courage éprouvé ont tant de peine à résister à ses attaques journalières; c'est là qu'on la voit faire usage de la puissance d'affiliation dont elle dispose encore, pour obscurcir les lumières de l'intelligence et tourmenter ces institutrices-mères, remplies de moralité et de savoir, qui ont autant de difficulté à servir les progrès de l'enseignement qu'à procurer une position sortable à leur famille.

Si les fondations religieuses, qui presque toutes se livrent à l'instruction de la jeunesse, se développent aujourd'hui plus au large et plus en

sécurité que les institutions particulières écrasées par les frais excessifs et la concurrence effrénée qui foisonne de toutes parts, ce n'est point à la foi vivante, à l'excellence des vocations qu'il faut l'attribuer; c'est au principe matériel d'association qui les constitue, qu'on doit demander le secret de leur croissance et de leurs ressources; car, à cette heure, quel est le nom de simple religieuse ou de supérieure haute et digne qui s'élève de la multitude des communautés? quels sont les actes de vertus saillantes que le peuple, qui n'a cependant pas perdu le sentiment de ce qui est grand et beau, cherche à glorifier et à bénir?

A notre époque laborieuse et agitée, où se soulèvent tant d'idées effervescentes, où se font tant d'études et de recherches dans les arts, la philosophie, les sciences et l'industrie, et auxquelles un grand nombre de femmes apportent leur part de talent et de zèle, quelle est la pensée chaleureuse qui soit sortie du cloître? quelle œuvre marquante, quel précieux livre de sagesse ou d'érudition ont signalé l'existence de tant de femmes appelées à cette mission sainte qui conduisait autrefois les populations dans la route éclairée du salut?

C'est que, il faut le dire, le génie claustral, providence des temps qui ne sont plus, est un souffle mourant; la vocation religieuse, qui n'existe que

par les traditions du passé, est forcément stationnaire ; il est permis de croire que la force morale et les exemples généreux, dont notre société a un si pressant besoin, ne peuvent ressortir des dogmes altérés et des réminiscences du moyen-âge ; la perfection ne réside plus dans ces démonstrations contre nature que la raison réprouve ; la voix de la sagesse nous fait entendre qu'on peut contenter Dieu, aider ses frères et résister aux mauvais penchans du monde, sans lit de cendres ni cilice ; aux yeux de tous, le dévouement et l'abnégation des sœurs de Charité qui se vouent au soulagement des infirmités humaines, sont des actions plus dignes du Ciel que le morne recueillement et la captivité perpétuelle ; et en vérité, si les privations et l'anxiété qu'on endure avec force et résignation, sont un titre de vertu méritante et glorieuse auprès du Tout-Puissant, il n'est plus nécessaire de se réfugier au cloître pour se livrer à des épreuves de cette nature ; ce n'est plus même au sein des maisons assez fortunées pour donner la dotation à leurs filles, que le couvent n'accueille qu'à ce prix, que la vocation religieuse doit puiser les sentiments de haute charité et l'esprit de sacrifice.

Si la vertu chrétienne consiste dans les souffrances du corps et de l'âme, dans la sainte ardeur et la sublimité des devoirs les plus difficiles à remplir, c'est au foyer des familles qui savent

compatir aux douleurs qu'elles endurent, c'est parmi ceux qui n'ont d'autre appui que la Providence et le labeur aride qui soutiennent leur position dépendante et chanceuse, que vous la trouverez sans coup férir.

Aujourd'hui que nul n'est exempt de cette instruction moyenne qui pénètre partout, on ne sait que penser de cette indifférence impassible, de cette inactivité qui consume les lentes heures des récluses, il faut croire que la langueur et l'uniformité de la vie végétative qu'on mène au couvent, n'y attirent plus ces femmes aimantes et exaltées qui recherchaient autrefois la solitude, pour s'élancer dans l'infini et se nourrir d'idéalités mystérieuses. La méditation y est défaillante et morte; aucune existence noble et belle n'y fait entendre un cantique pieux sur nos misères de chaque jour; pas un soupir d'attendrissement, aucune voix mélodieuse et douce ne dépasse les murs de ces habitations paisibles pour appeler à elle tant d'âmes souffrantes et affaissées que le désespoir déchire; aussi voit-on chaque jour ces orphelines délaissées, ces pauvres filles sans appui, égarées, trahies ou coupables, courir à la honte ou au suicide, plutôt que de venir au couvent comme à la maison maternelle, pour y trouver la vie et l'espérance, parce qu'elles redouteraient en y entrant de voir pour jamais se fermer sur elles les portes du saint

lieu, parce que la parole qui les y attire n'est ni assez affectueuse ni assez consolante, et que la cloche monotone et les sombres accents des psalmodies du cloître retentissent comme un écho lugubre dans leur âme; du reste, les couvents n'abritent plus les filles pauvres; et les jeunes demoiselles qui se destinent à l'état religieux, auraient des principes assez sûrs et des mœurs assez honnêtes pour résister sans lui aux séductions mondaines. En se consacrant à la retraite, elles causent des douleurs à la tendresse maternelle, et la société perd en elles, sans compensation, des mères de famille qui eussent donné de beaux exemples de dévouement et d'amour.

Ainsi se trouve annulé, pour ainsi dire, le sacerdoce de cette vocation; son rôle sera discordant sur la scène du monde, tant qu'elle conservera le caractère et l'esprit qu'elle a reçus des temps gothiques; il nous est impossible, à moins de voir tomber subitement en poussière tout ce qui est en progrès, tout ce qui fait la force et la prospérité de la civilisation actuelle, à moins d'assister à la résurrection d'un passé dont les restes sont battus en brèche de toutes parts, nous ne pouvons, dis-je, concevoir la réapparition des communautés religieuses de femmes dans leur splendeur première, sous la forme constitutive qui les dirige encore.

Cependant quoique l'esprit monastique soit

depuis longtemps insensible aux perplexités humaines, et sans influence sur la destinée des femmes, il ne peut pas s'éteindre; le sentiment des choses célestes, le besoin de la retraite dans les caractères timides et soucieux suffiraient seuls pour l'alimenter et le maintenir. M. de Ségrais dit quelque part « qu'entre les causes générales qui » multiplient le nombre des couvents, il avait » remarqué un penchant parmi les jeunes filles » et les jeunes garçons dans les pays chauds, à se » faire religieuses ou religieux dans l'âge de l'adolescence, et que c'était là une attaque de mélancolie d'amour, une maladie qu'il appelait la » petite-vérole de l'esprit. »

Disons sérieusement que la force et la richesse qui résident dans l'harmonie de la vie commune, sont une démonstration parlante, une réalisation précieuse d'association morale et matérielle qui seule serait un titre de conservation aux yeux des économistes actuels.

D'un autre côté, la profession religieuse, devenant plus directe en son action, plus attentive à deviner et à guérir les maladies de l'âme, ne peut-elle pas d'un moment à l'autre produire un entraînement nouveau, offrir un asile de repos et de paix aux esprits fatigués des convulsions politiques incessantes, qui font naître la haine et la confusion partout? Est-il présumable que toutes les volontés qui savent converger sur un

même point, s'entendre et se réunir, quand il s'agit de voler à la conquête du progrès matériel, seront toujours divergentes pour arriver au progrès moral ? La perfectibilité ne serait-elle habile qu'à assouplir les métaux et diriger la force inerte ? L'intelligence de l'homme ne se montrerait donc toute puissante que pour assembler les pierres, composer des produits chimiques et harmoniser d'arides classifications ? Lorsque l'association industrielle perce les monts, traverse les mers, embrasse tout le globe pour le soumettre à sa loi, quand le génie mécanique sillonne la terre de rainures en fer, l'arrose de canaux, la pourvoit d'artères et de veines comme un être animé et immense, en lui disant de faire sentir à tous les peuples dont elle est la mère, les battements multipliés de son cœur, l'association morale ne saura-t-elle rien tenter pour relier les sympathies humaines, et pour obtenir dans l'ordre spirituel des résultats d'une valeur équivalente ? Ne saura-t-elle conduire les intelligences les plus libres et les plus éclairées vers un même intérêt qui les anime, vers un but commun qu'elles affectionnent, et les amener toutes à enfanter ces vastes œuvres de la pensée qu'on ne peut attendre que du concours des plus énergiques et des plus nobles volontés ?

Dans sa sphère, la vocation religieuse doit

prétendre à cette fin salutaire, il ne tient qu'à elle de reconquérir son antique influence, en se plaçant à la tête du mouvement moral; c'est à la condition de s'assimiler tous les éléments nouveaux et progressifs utiles à l'élévation des femmes; il faut qu'elle se hâte de poser un terme à la durée du célibat et rejette toutes les modifications qui engourdissent le corps et la pensée. En dépouillant ces mystiques frivolités, si prodigues du temps et si avares de réflexions sérieuses, elle doit se poser la solution du problème de l'association dans ses conséquences les plus généreuses et les plus favorables à la cause des femmes.

Espérons que la science religieuse trouvera le moyen de raviver et d'adoucir les ressorts endurcis de l'âme, comme la science de l'industrie régénère et fait fleurir la puissance matérielle; croyons que, sans cesser d'être fidèle au Dieu de charité *qui n'est point un Dieu de mort*¹, au sein du recueillement et de la solitude, la religieuse saura puiser dans les plus belles années de la jeunesse les grands talents et les vertus sociales, qu'elle reportera au milieu de la vie réelle, pour la moraliser et l'embellir; et que, semblable à la vestale romaine, sa présence au

¹ J.-J. Rousseau.

milieu de nos assemblées publiques et de nos fêtes, ramènera des jours plus riants et plus purs. Nous ne chercherons plus alors quelle est la voie qui peut sauver le monde, car nous serons entrés dans la terre promise de l'association et de la foi.



LETTRE HUITIÈME.

DE L'AUTORITÉ.

Mon amie, après avoir parcouru toutes les carrières remplies par les femmes qui prennent une part active et laborieuse au mouvement de la société, après avoir, dans l'intérêt de tous et d'elles-mêmes, donné quelques indications utiles pour faciliter les conditions nouvelles que leur impose le cours accéléré du monde, j'éprouve le besoin de revenir sur mes pas, afin de rechercher comment on peut aider chacune d'elles à s'acheminer hardiment dès l'enfance la plus tendre vers cette élévation promise par le travail intellectuel et les efforts de la raison. Je crois qu'ayant fait ressortir tout ce qu'il y a de force et de volonté dans la liberté et l'intelligence, il est urgent de montrer le complément

des ressources éducationnelles puisées dans la valeur de l'autorité morale.

D'abord, j'ai dû m'inquiéter du but qu'il fallait atteindre, et constater les facultés nécessaires qui sont le partage de tous ; maintenant je vais m'enquérir des moyens extérieurs qui peuvent leur servir d'auxiliaires, ce dessein me ramène précisément à mon livre, que je veux m'efforcer, autant que possible, de rendre pratique en éducation.

Sans parler de la vocation des femmes strictement ménagères, dont le nombre tend chaque jour à décroître, nous avons vu que les femmes sont appelées, dans l'état actuel de l'industrie, aux beaux arts, à l'enseignement et à la profession religieuse. Vous savez que, dans ma pensée intime, la femme étant une création aussi complète que l'homme, je la juge capable de remplir toutes les fonctions auxquelles voudront l'appeler le génie progressif et la sagesse constitutive.

Mais ce n'est point ce propos que je me sens disposée à discuter avec vous en ce moment ; je pense même que ces questions de priorité, ces prétentions qui se dressent pour retomber impuissantes en cherchant à constituer un droit, sont tout-à-fait inutiles ou oiseuses ; la science peut décréter que la femme est un être frêle ou inférieur, la souveraineté masculine peut nous

condamner autocratiquement à un servage intellectuel que nulle émancipation ne saurait affranchir, nous n'en sommes pas moins les arbitres absolus de notre destinée partielle, comme les hommes le sont de la leur.

Lorsque la moitié du genre humain, l'homme, notre compagnon de voyage sur cette terre, a si long-temps déprimé sa propre espèce en tyran orgueilleux, lorsqu'il a chargé des chaînes dépendantes de l'autorité intellectuelle la presque totalité de sa race, nous, timides et douces, faciles à comprimer par la force rude et matérielle, pouvions-nous ne pas courber le front dans la poussière en présence d'un maître si jaloux et si superbe, puisque, pour subir sans doute la loi fatale d'autorité, qui a besoin d'opprimer pour grandir, l'humanité dans sa toute-puissance est encore inclinée comme un frêle roseau devant quelques chênes géants qui planent sur le monde, en ne laissant arriver que les pâles rayons d'un soleil obscurci sur la multitude des rejetons qui semblent faits pour végéter dans l'ombre?

Quoi qu'il en soit de ces volontés collectives d'hommes ou de femmes destinés à suivre éternellement l'impulsion supérieure qui les entraîne, la volonté individuelle, prise isolément partout et au hasard, n'en est pas moins libre et maîtresse d'agir sur elle-même et

capable d'édifier seule sa propre élévation.

C'est à cette puissance de liberté et de courage que je crois égale dans les deux sexes, c'est à toutes les intelligences que je juge esclaves de cette volonté qui est la moralité même, que je m'adresse sans relâche, avec la certitude d'être entendue de loin en loin par quelques-uns ; aussi vous avez dû remarquer, mon amie, dans le cours de ces épîtres, le penchant qui me porte à quitter souvent l'enfance inattentive pour parler à un âge plus pensif et plus mûr ; je sens à chaque instant la nécessité de m'appuyer sur la raison et la conscience déjà grandie, qui se plaisent à écouter la parole sensée qui les éclaire ; car si, à tout prendre, l'esprit peut se passer de guide et de secours pour tout comprendre et tout acquérir, le cœur ne peut sans danger se livrer avec la même indépendance aux caprices des passions contraires qui l'émeuvent dans tous les sens.

Si l'intelligence qui n'agit jamais seule, puisque rien n'est fractionné en nous, tire sa plus grande valeur de la volonté, il importe donc de donner une direction à cette volonté si efficace et si indispensable pour faire mouvoir tous les ressorts intellectuels.

Mais pour que l'éducation soit habile à montrer la route, il faut qu'elle sache bien elle-même le point où elle veut arriver ; les imper-

fections de l'enfance sont semblables à celles de l'homme fait; mêmes difficultés se présentent dans l'art de gouverner les hommes et les enfants. L'éducation ne pouvant, dans le tout jeune âge, se confier à la libre volonté ni à l'intelligence qui en dépend essentiellement, est obligée, dans ce cas d'omnipotente nécessité, d'agir avec certitude en s'étayant sur l'autorité.

Vous vous rappelez qu'en vous parlant des vocations en général, je vous ai fait sentir l'importance d'une éducation morale primitive, commune et indispensable à tous les états; mais cette éducation générale, publique ou particulière, la plus essentielle à mon sens, ne peut être qu'imparfaite en elle-même et inutile à la jeunesse, autant que décourageante pour les institutrices, sans un principe sacré solidement établi et présidant avec une gravité sainte aux développements de la vie sociale ou de famille. Telle est malheureusement la situation dans laquelle se trouve le principe d'autorité à notre époque, qu'on pourrait presque dire que l'éducation n'existe plus. Car, sans le pouvoir qu'il recevait de la sanction morale, l'enseignement n'est plus qu'une profession aride et mercenaire, qui n'est prise que quelque peu que lorsqu'elle mène à la fortune comme toutes les industries. Depuis que l'autorité divine a perdu son prestige et sa grandeur par l'engourdisse-

ment du dogme; depuis que la lettre stérile et presque morte a paralysé l'esprit, que la forme a obscurci le fond en laissant rétrécir la puissance qui émane de Dieu, source de toute autorité, il n'en est aucune qui puisse rester debout. Comment espérer que le pouvoir religieux puisse imposer à la volonté des enfants, lorsqu'il a perdu tout crédit sur le cœur des pères; quand l'autorité temporelle, à son tour vivante image de la suprématie céleste, a reçu le contre-coup des croyances éteintes, et que l'impulsion ne sait plus si c'est d'en haut ou d'en bas qu'elle doit venir, on ne doit pas s'étonner de voir l'autorité aussi chancelante et aussi méconnue dans les familles que dans la société entière.

Au sein de cette confusion, qui laisse l'anarchie victorieuse répandre partout le scepticisme démolisseur, on doit redouter de voir l'éducation privée et publique devenir une impossibilité radicale; voilà pourtant où nous sommes près d'arriver. Garrottée et muette au milieu du chaos des idées modernes, l'autorité ne rencontre dans tous les âges et dans tous les rangs que des volontés insoumises et des désirs égarés : autorité civile et militaire, autorité scientifique, morale ou religieuse, autorité maritale ou paternelle; toutes ces puissances qui s'entr'aident et se donnent la main, tous ces

principes d'ordre des temps passés, construits et posés avec unité et ensemble, ont perdu leur plus grande valeur, qui était celle de l'harmonie. Cependant la Providence, en laissant discréditer et amoindrir les grandes institutions fondées par nos pères avec tant de sacrifices et d'ardeur, a semblé vouloir leur rénovation lente et successive, puisqu'elle nous a refusé le pouvoir de les relever dans leur intégrité première. Ce qui reste donc à faire de plus sage, après avoir jeté plus d'un regard attristé autour de soi, c'est de s'appuyer sur d'imposants débris, et de travailler à construire prudemment l'édifice avec les éléments nouveaux, qui se font jour au milieu du désordre et de la nécessité impérieuse; mais il ne faut point se dissimuler que c'est une tâche dure et aride, lorsqu'on prend à cœur de la concevoir dans sa grandeur et sa durée.

En éducation surtout, où la pratique et la leçon vivante de l'exemple sont cent fois plus attachantes que toutes les théories renfermées dans tous les traités spéciaux, je plains tous ceux que le sort appelle à cette œuvre; je gémis à toute heure sur ma propre condition, sur mon insuffisance à gouverner selon le zèle qui m'anime tant d'esprits rétifs et indépendants, qui ne me laissent aucune prise; je regrette de ne pouvoir offrir aux jeunes filles de beaux mo-

dèles de femmes, des caractères saints et vénéralés du monde, qu'elles n'auraient qu'à choisir et à imiter.

Quoique moins dure et moins chanceuse que la nôtre, la mission des mères n'est pas exempte d'incertitudes et de labeurs infructueux ; car pendant les années nombreuses que j'ai consacrées aux soins de l'éducation publique, j'ai trouvé bien peu de jeunes filles élevées et instruites par leur mère dans ce respect profond pour l'autorité des maîtresses qui rend notre devoir si doux et si facile à remplir.

Je vous dirai dans le cours de cette lettre quelques-unes des tribulations causées par le dépérissement du pouvoir enseignant ; je vous raconterai les encouragements que rencontrent l'insubordination et l'inconvenance des élèves dans la faiblesse et la légèreté des parents.

C'est une triste condition de l'esprit humain de se jeter sans cesse dans les extrêmes ; sans doute l'autorité antique était destinée à voir pâlir son auréole imposante ; lorsque l'édifice est ruiné par le temps, la décrépitude doit gagner du faite aux fondations les plus profondes.

Le despotisme de la famille, incompatible avec les sentiments et les besoins nouveaux, a dû périr par ses propres excès ; mais l'esprit de critique et de réforme va toujours au-delà du but, la puissance abusive a compromis dans sa

chute l'autorité elle-même; les préoccupations de l'égoïsme, les romans, l'indifférence, le théâtre et les conversations frivoles et frondeuses détachent de jour en jour quelques-uns des vestiges que le temps a laissés sur le sol.

Je n'essaierai pas d'appuyer de preuves historiques l'autorité immense que possédait le chef de la famille, en montrant la décroissance inévitable qu'elle a dû subir jusqu'à nos jours; il est certain que cette sévérité extrême du pouvoir absolu qui régnait sans partage au foyer domestique était depuis long-temps un objet de gêne et de censure même à l'époque de Montaigne, puisque toutes les idées de douceur et de liberté introduites naguère dans la réforme educationnelle, si éloquemment développées par Jean-Jacques, avaient été indiquées avec une pénétration admirable par l'esprit si observateur et si hardi du vieux philosophe gascon.

« Je veux mal (dit-il dans son excellent
» chapitre *de l'affection des pères aux enfants*)
» à cette coutume d'interdire aux enfants l'appellation paternelle et leur enjoindre une estrangère comme plus reverentiale, nature
» n'ayant volontiers pas suffisamment pourvu à
» notre auctorité. Nous appelons Dieu puissant
» père, et dédaignons que nos enfants nous en
» appellent. J'ai réformé cette créance en ma

» famille , j'accuse toute violence en l'éducation
 » d'une âme tendre qu'on dresse pour l'hon-
 » neur et la liberté. Il y a je ne sais quoi de
 » servile en la rigueur et en la contrainte , et
 » tiens que ce qui ne se peut faire par la raison
 » et par prudence et adresse ne se fait jamais
 » par la force , on m'a ainsi élevé; ils disent
 » qu'en tout mon premier âge , je n'ai tasté des
 » verges que deux coups et bien mollement. J'ai
 » dû la pareille aux enfants que j'ay eu; ils
 » me meurent tous en main, mais Léonore, ma
 » seule fille qui est échappé à cette infortune, a
 » atteint six ans et plus sans qu'on ayt employé
 » à sa conduite et pour le châtiment de ses
 » fautes puériles (l'indulgence de sa mère s'y
 » appliquant aysément) autres choses que pa-
 » roles et bien douces. »

« C'est aussi folie et injustice, dit-il plus bas ,
 » de priver les enfants qui sont en âge de la fa-
 » miliarité des pères et vouloir maintenir en
 » leur endroict une morgue austère et dédai-
 » gneuse, espérant par là les tenir en crainte et
 » en obéissance; quand je pourrais me faire
 » craindre, j'aimerais encore mieux me faire ai-
 » mer. »

La fêrule et les corrections rigoureuses de
 toute nature ont disparu avec la rudesse pater-
 nelle, nous sommes allés jusqu'à une familia-
 rité plus grande peut-être que le demandait

Montaigne et bien au-delà des vœux exprimés par Rousseau : la tendresse maternelle n'aurait plus le courage de se voiler à présent que l'égalité la plus entière s'est glissée dans les relations filiales, de telle sorte que le tutoiement, signe de camaraderie amicale et sans gêne, est devenu L'APPELLATION usitée dans le langage des enfants s'adressant aux mères.

Je suis loin de censurer tout ce qu'il y a de douceur et de satisfaction dans les épanchements de la tendre amitié qu'une mère accorde à sa fille, c'est peut-être une des jouissances les plus vives et les plus complètes que nous puissions éprouver; mais; en y songeant, pouvons-nous nier que ce ne soit pas un plaisir égoïste, un besoin satisfait qui ne profite souvent qu'à nous? Il faudrait savoir si ces caresses, cette idolâtrie que nous ne prenons plus la peine de contenir ni de dissimuler, ne sont pas une faute grave en éducation; si nous délasser et nous distraire sans cesse par des cajoleries qui n'obtiennent jamais un grand retour, est un acte de vertu, un principe moral qui demande quelque effort de sagesse et de dévouement plus profitable à nos enfants qu'une réserve calme, une résolution constante et courageuse pour faire exécuter les devoirs que leur éducation comporte. Enfin, et c'est là où je veux en venir, il y a un âge où la raison est presque nulle chez les enfants;

maintenant que vous n'avez plus de crainte à leur inspirer , puisque le grand principe du châtiment éternel qui était la base la plus consistante de l'autorité , établi sur la terreur et sur la force , est presque disparu ; aujourd'hui qu'on ne peut plus inspirer cette horreur du mal par la laideur du péché dont le nom seul blessait autrefois la bouche ; à présent que les réglemens et les préceptes jadis si uniformes et si généralement suivis sont aux trois quarts effacés et que chacun suit une route à sa guise , ne vous étonnez pas si le désordre est peut-être encore plus flagrant dans l'éducation que partout ailleurs.

Afin de remédier à de tels maux , de sévères commandemens , de précieux écrits sont faits journellement sur cette matière ; mais , semblables aux consultations d'apparat qu'on assemble au lit d'un mourant , ils ne peuvent offrir d'expédient salutaire et d'infailible guérison pour des douleurs si profondes et si invétérées. On ne sait à quel entendre de tant de pronostics dissemblables , laquelle choisir de tant de recettes contraires ; c'est une vérité , que jamais on n'a fait de plus beaux livres , qu'en aucun temps on n'a écrit de si fines observations , des théories aussi minutieuses pour élever la jeunesse , et jamais peut-être il n'y eut moins de véritable éducation qu'à présent. Aujourd'hui que l'enseignement n'a plus d'autre appui que

la raison et la liberté, tous les conseils, tous les traités d'éducation pratique, si compliqués, si détaillés qu'ils soient, ne peuvent suffire ; en général, ils contiennent d'excellentes observations, présentent des moyens très-utiles aux femmes éminemment morales qui les conçoivent pour s'étudier elles-mêmes en particulier et diriger leurs propres enfants ; mais ne croyez pas gouverner la jeunesse avec ce seul secours applicable à tous, ce serait pour la plupart des mères une tentative sans résultat. On a beau faire un travail d'analyse exacte et minutieuse, personne ne peut prescrire la millième partie de ce que doit faire elle-même une mère institutrice gouvernante de sa fille pour se conformer aux différences de lieux, de circonstances et de caractères qui varient sans cesse dans chaque famille ; et à vrai dire, on a voulu tenter l'impossible en éducation : on a cherché à scruter le cœur des fragiles enfants mieux qu'on ne scrute celui des hommes faits, et obtenir des petits ce qu'on n'essaie pas de demander aux grands ; on s'est attaché à des vétilles en noyant ses regards dans des particularités qu'on a su rendre importantes, et on a négligé d'insister sur les grands traits devant lesquels tout le reste devait s'effacer ou pâlir.

Dans l'éducation ancienne, on n'avait que faire de toutes ces subtilités, de tous ces préservatifs

mesquins et puérils qui deviennent insaisissables ; on ne songeait pas à s'arrêter devant les nuances infinies des fantaisies et des caprices volontaires de l'enfance ; on savait que tout être avait une âme égale à sauver pour l'éternité, et cette grande pensée dominait toutes les autres ; et l'éducation, qui était une pour tous, trouvait en elle une autorité immense : il fallait que la volonté se fît humble et soumise en se laissant guider dans la voie du salut commun, sous peine d'éternelles et terribles punitions ; et la jeunesse tout entière, souple et craintive, obéissait avec docilité à tous les commandements, parce que le nom tout-puissant du Dieu bon ou sévère dans son équité se mêlait sans cesse aux ordres prescrits, parce qu'elle voyait en tous lieux les pères, les parents, les étrangers, les serviteurs s'incliner pieusement devant l'autorité religieuse qui avait tracé les règles sur toutes choses et multiplié les devoirs pour les fidèles de tout âge et de toutes conditions à toute heure du jour.

L'autorité a beau se trouver pure et bien constituée dans les livres dont nous parlions plus haut, l'art et l'esprit de doctrine peuvent faire concorder leurs préceptes avec les commandements religieux, et mettre au premier rang l'instruction des saintes Écritures ; ce qui constitue l'influence du pouvoir religieux, comme de tout autre pouvoir, c'est l'universalité du

sentiment qu'il inspire, c'est la foi vénérée qu'il verse dans tous les cœurs; ce sont les pratiques qu'il impose et les lois qu'il fait exécuter par tous à des degrés différents, mais dont l'utilité sainte n'est contestée par aucun, qui font de l'autorité religieuse le plus puissant auxiliaire en éducation.

Ce ne sont pas les paroles ni l'instruction évangélique renfermées dans les livres, et que les maîtresses ou les mères font répéter à leurs enfants, qui seules peuvent les émouvoir et les convaincre, mais bien plutôt la leçon incessante de l'exemple formant autour d'eux une atmosphère d'obéissance répandue sur tout, qui leur fait aimer le devoir.

Qu'arrive-t-il dans l'éducation nouvelle, où la religion n'est que sur les lèvres et non dans les cœurs? c'est que l'enfance, habile à lire dans nos regards, distingue les mots de la chose même; elle se garde bien de se rendre à de rares exhortations prononcées avec gravité et mystère; ce qu'elle imite, ce sont des actions fréquentes, des habitudes inaltérables; ce qu'elle vénère, c'est la conviction qui répète sous mille formes une pensée-mère qui la domine en donnant l'impulsion à tout ce qui l'entoure.

Oui, mon amie, c'est un malheur pour les sociétés comme pour les individus, lorsque l'autorité sous quelque forme qu'elle se pro-

duise ne s'appuie pas sur un principe assez élevé pour être à l'abri des atteintes terrestres. Que voulez-vous ? les époques progressives, comme on les appelle, ont aussi leur grande part de difficultés et de misères ; à tout prendre, le récit des conquêtes de la sagesse humaine est une bien lamentable histoire, à côté des victoires on compte les revers, toujours le gain rembruni par la perte. Le siècle qui s'écoule a beau jeter derrière lui un regard triomphateur ; son char, comme celui des siècles passés, ne fait qu'osciller entre les mêmes obstacles. A peine un peuple a-t-il sommeillé quelques jours dans les liens de l'autorité qui l'opprimait en le protégeant, qu'on les lui voit briser pour courir les hasards d'une liberté qui le livre aux intempéries de l'orgueil et du doute. Si l'on attendait avant d'agir en éducation qu'une autorité morale et religieuse fût affermie ou reconstruite dans sa plénitude et sa vigueur, il faudrait bien souvent se condamner au mutisme ou à l'inaction. Mais il existe dans la société des générations qui s'élèvent un pouvoir de fait comme au milieu des générations déjà vieilles, dans la révolte ou la contrainte, un état transitoire dont la durée, quoique passagère, est cependant assez prolongée pour faire profiter le présent des ressources nouvelles qui conduisent aux rénovations plus complètes de l'avenir.

La Providence ne détruit rien entièrement

sans substituer en partie autre chose à la place ; à défaut de convictions religieuses et d'autorité universelle , il surgit au besoin un pouvoir inévitable , qui, n'étant pas exercé au nom d'une doctrine unique et vénérée de tous, fait entendre une voix impérieuse à laquelle de tout temps il a fallu forcément obéir : ce pouvoir, c'est la nécessité, qui enfante parfois la force et la sagesse.

L'autorité ancienne dans l'éducation s'appuyait sur des principes plus hauts et plus forts pour arriver à ses fins ; elle ne réclamait pas de la jeunesse ce que nous sommes obligés d'en exiger aujourd'hui ; et, chose étrange , il était peut-être plus facile d'être généralement obéi, en commandant autrefois l'humilité, la simplicité, le mépris des vanités mondaines qui favorisent l'ignorance paisible et l'inactivité insoucieuse, qu'en prêchant comme à présent le règne de la capacité, le dogme du talent, source de l'opulence et de la gloire.

Croyez-vous qu'il soit facile d'acquérir les connaissances étendues, d'obtenir les progrès rapides, l'habileté précoce qui procurent l'honneur et les richesses ? pensez - vous que les heureux parvenus qui font l'acquisition de ces grands avantages y arrivent sans agitation et sans courage ? Regardez la plupart des élus de la fortune, les sommités de toutes sortes qui ont

atteint une position brillante ou sortable, ce n'est pas sans peine qu'ils ont traversé tant d'écueils; vous verrez aussi que les habitudes de travail, d'ordre et d'obéissance qu'ils contractent dans leur jeunesse ont été pour eux le plus sûr moyen de mériter la possession de ces prospérités enviées par la foule : aussi sans trop savoir en quoi consiste l'éducation, ni préciser l'usage qu'on en veut faire, on sent par instinct le pouvoir qu'elle a sur l'avenir des masses et de l'homme isolé; tout le monde court après elle, on entend répéter à toute heure cet axiome : *La fortune passe et l'éducation reste; avec elle, ajoute-t-on encore, on se tire toujours d'affaire.* Et des familles sans nombre font réellement d'onnereux sacrifices pour enlever leurs enfants à l'éducation du foyer domestique dans le dessein de contribuer à leur bonheur en leur donnant une direction jugée préférable parce qu'elle est plus élégante et plus policée. Il est bon de remarquer que dans ce cas on confond toujours l'instruction, qu'on va chercher chèrement au loin, avec l'éducation, qu'on peut recevoir chez soi dans la plus humble chaumière.

N'est-ce pas une vérité encore qu'au rang de nos rêves les plus chers, des chimères que nous caressons avec le plus de charme se trouve l'espérance de voir nos enfants posséder les rares perfections auxquelles nous avons si souvent aspiré

nous-mêmes. Ambitieuses mères, ne désirons-nous pas pour nos filles, non-seulement la beauté qui nous abandonne ou qui nous fit défaut, mais encore les dons du cœur et les grâces de l'esprit qui les feraient chérir ? Ne voudrions-nous pas leur léguer à tout jamais l'expérience qui nous éclaire, les talents et les vertus qu'il n'est plus temps pour nous d'acquérir ?

Préoccupé comme on l'est aujourd'hui des intérêts et du bonheur de la famille, et reconnaissant que l'éducation peut devenir la souveraine dispensatrice de tant de faveurs, on croirait que nous devons tous avoir une haute idée de l'enseignement, un sentiment profond de l'autorité qu'il exige, aussi bien lorsque nous nous imposons cette tâche à nous-mêmes qu'en la confiant aux autres ; il n'en est rien, je vous l'assure, l'opinion des parents se dirige sur une foule d'idées superficielles et fausses qui pervertissent chaque jour les saines traditions que le passé nous a transmises ; on se figure d'après certaines redites erronées sur le progrès des lumières que l'âme n'a plus aucune tache originelle, que le mal et les passions sont en décroissance ; on est convaincu que le dix-neuvième siècle possède des procédés matériels tout nouveaux pour inoculer l'application et le vouloir aux enfants, et leur donner la science sans recourir aux vieux principes de moralisation à l'usage de nos pères ;

on ne peut pas dire que l'éducation ne soit la grande affaire, mais on s'arrange avec la pensée que l'habileté des institutrices ou la recette des méthodes doivent tenir lieu entre élèves et maîtresses de considération morale d'un côté et de docilité respectueuse de l'autre.

Je vous disais donc en ayant égard à l'intérêt personnel, qui tient une trop vaste place au temps actuel pour ne pas entrer en ligne de compte, qu'à défaut de croyance et de grandes vues dirigeantes et intelligibles pour tous, qui formaient au temps passé l'attention exclusive des esprits et rejaillissaient dans tous les degrés de l'éducation, que la soif des richesses et de la renommée qui exalte l'imagination devrait être de nos jours un stimulant, une nécessité factice, favorable au développement du mérite supérieur. Sans doute aussi les volontés étant les mêmes en convoitise mais inégales en persévérance et en courage, il serait urgent, rien que pour satisfaire à l'entraînement des idées générales, de donner à l'éducation un véhicule d'autorité puissante, afin que la sagesse et l'expérience puissent imposer leurs commandements à la déraison et à la mollesse qui ne produisent que découragement et désordre.

Cependant, en réclamant l'autorité en éducation dans l'intérêt même des nécessités matérielles du siècle, qui ne laissent ni repos ni trêve à nos facultés, je suis loin de désirer une sou-

mission aussi entière que dans le passé; il ne faut pas croire que je réclame cette déférence aux ordres supérieurs de manière à faire plier comme autrefois l'intelligence devant toutes les idées imposées; je pense que cette influence doit se renfermer dans les limites des préceptes moraux.

L'autorité ne saurait donner des lois à l'intelligence ni arrêter l'essor qui la fait graviter sans cesse vers l'infini; mais en s'adressant à la raison, qui se connaît, qui juge la fragilité de notre nature et sent la nécessité de poser des bornes à nos désirs, elle régleme nos sentiments et nos passions, c'est elle qui établit la justice et immortalise le dévouement; et lorsque, mobile et passagère comme les mouvements qu'elle s'efforce d'harmoniser, elle devient à son tour un obstacle, une chaîne accablante qui gêne les élan d'une vaste pensée, à peine la voit-on dépérir et tomber qu'une autre autorité la remplace.

Il ne peut pas être en mon pouvoir de poser les termes nouveaux dans lesquels l'autorité pourrait fixer les relations coordonnées des éléments confus qui dirigent le monde; je ne voudrais établir qu'une nécessité pratique dans l'éducation générale: c'est que, pour répondre aux vues d'instruction de la pluralité des familles, il faudrait rendre au professorat la plus grande partie du pouvoir et de la considération dont il jouissait autrefois; je voudrais qu'il fût reconnu aussi, dans l'édu-

cation maternelle, où la mère se constitue institutrice de sa fille, qu'on ne peut prétendre à aucun succès, si, indépendamment de toute méthode, on ne fonde pas un principe d'autorité ferme et immuable qui donne l'impulsion à la volonté quand celle-ci sommeille ou devient rétive.

Bien avant que l'expérience vînt désabuser les rians projets d'éducation que je formais pour mes filles, j'avais cru pouvoir ne rien ordonner qu'à leur raison et tout obtenir de leur tendresse; long-temps j'ai fait usage de ces suaves entretiens de mère, j'ai employé ces conseils insinuants, ces remontrances motivées qui sembleraient devoir adoucir et convaincre, mais bientôt il fallut répudier ces moyens lénitifs et dilatoires pour me soumettre à la réalité d'une pratique plus sérieuse et plus efficace. Il est un âge auquel on ne peut s'adresser par la persuasion; et quoiqu'il soit vrai, comme je l'ai dit plus haut, que l'esprit de crainte et d'obéissance soit grandement affaibli dans la jeunesse, il reste encore entre les mains d'une mère des armes assez puissantes pour maîtriser une volonté rebelle; l'enfant le plus indomptable ne saurait résister long temps à la persistance d'un commandement inflexible, aux privations de plaisir qui l'affligent et à la main équitable et caressante qui l'encourage dès qu'il montre la plus légère intention de s'amender et de fléchir.

Aussi j'hésite presque à le dire, mais ce n'est pas toujours l'enfance qu'il faudrait gourmander et accuser d'indocilité et d'irrévérence, le blâme devrait souvent retomber ailleurs ; les grands parents, les mères, nous toutes qui faisons de nos filles des fétiches adorées devant lesquelles nous nous inclinons suppliantes et craintives, mériterions maintes fois d'être morigénées plus sévèrement qu'elles. Si la longue fréquentation des élèves de tout âge, l'habitude d'observer leurs défauts et leurs qualités pouvaient donner quelque poids à mon jugement sur cette question, je vous dirais plus, qu'en désirant pour la jeunesse une direction sévère, je m'appuie sur un fait que l'expérience a pu montrer à d'autres ainsi qu'à moi : j'ai toujours vu, quelle que soit leur condition, que les enfants qui ont puisé dans le très-jeune âge des principes de soumission et de respect se montrent toutes sans exception non-seulement plus aimables avec leurs proches et plus gracieuses avec les étrangers, mais encore plus attentives et par conséquent plus intelligentes et plus aptes à profiter de tous les genres d'étude auxquels on les voit s'adonner ; elles sont en un mot les modèles de leurs compagnes, la consolation et la gloire de celles qui les dirigent. Ai-je besoin de dire que des résultats tout-à-fait opposés se présentent toujours lorsqu'ils sont produits par des causes contraires ?

J'ai souvent entendu répéter dans le cercle des mères ces paroles d'une tolérance insoucieuse, dictées par une tendresse excessive, qui selon moi va plus loin que l'imprudence : « *A quoi bon* » tourmenter, dit-on, ces pauvres enfants de privations, d'ordres impérieux, d'austères devoirs? » laissons-les jouir de leurs meilleurs jours; l'âge » des soucis et des revers, les heures de contrainte » et d'esclavage, le temps de la douleur viendront » assez tôt pour elles; qu'elles goûtent au moins » ces instants de bonheur que rien n'aura trou- » blé. »

Il faut bien réfuter malgré soi de semblables objections; bien qu'elles ne soient pas données tout-à-fait au sérieux, elles ont un air de bonhomie qui entraîne tandis qu'elles servent à colorer une dangereuse faiblesse. C'est ainsi qu'on entend encore faire ces réflexions étranges vis-à-vis des enfants que l'esprit d'indépendance et les gâteries démesurées ont rendues insupportables à voir. « Ce n'est rien, vous dit-on, tout cela passe, » les caractères changent avec l'âge, les défauts » de l'enfance n'existent plus quand la raison » arrive. »

En vérité je n'ose plus justifier, par le triste côté des intérêts matériels et de la nécessité temporaire, une doctrine aussi fondamentale que celle de l'autorité; je sais avec quelle légèreté, quelle quiétude dérisoire, on traite maintenant

les questions les plus graves. Il est facile de reconnaître, aux procédés bizarres usités dans l'éducation par beaucoup de familles, la prédominance des satisfactions égoïstes et les aberrations du scepticisme actuel. Imprévoyants que vous êtes, quoi ! vous voulez voiler à vos enfants les écueils de la vie, leur laisser croire que le ciel est toujours étoilé, les arbres toujours verts ? quand les routes sont si souvent arides et montagneuses, lorsqu'au milieu du jour le souffle des tempêtes vient tant de fois troubler l'eau du lac tranquille et lui ravir le sommeil de la nuit, vous voulez qu'elles ne soupçonnent d'autres chemins que le sentier couvert de fleurs qui borde le ruisseau limpide ? vous ne vous sentez pas la force d'opposer la moindre digue à leurs capricieux vœux ! Mais vous ne voyez donc pas que vous les bercez dans une illusion cruelle qui disparaîtra dès leur entrée dans le monde : et comment seront-elles préparées à supporter les premiers coups qui viendront les assaillir ? êtes-vous sûrs qu'elles ne succomberont pas à la première épreuve ?

Vous pensez aussi qu'il n'est besoin d'aucun étai, d'aucun secours pour diriger l'arbrisseau qui s'élève ; vous croyez qu'il sera temps encore de redresser sa tige quand elle aura pris sa courbure. Non non, dès que le rocher, l'autan furieux ou le torrent qui passe ont contourné

l'arbre qui croît en liberté, c'en est fait ; rien ne peut dénouer sa taille tortueuse.

Le plus grand mal qui puisse survenir de l'absence de soumission dans la jeunesse, c'est qu'elle se munit d'une sécheresse et d'une présomption dangereuses qui arrêtent l'intelligence et corrompent le cœur : sans hiérarchie, sans vénération ni condescendance, il ne peut y avoir apparence d'éducation.

Éduquer, c'est guider et conduire, et pour être conduit ne faut-il pas qu'on suive, qu'on obéisse ? S'élever, n'est ce pas monter et grandir, arriver au souverain empire de soi-même en faisant plier les penchants inférieurs sous l'autorité d'une raison suprême et d'une idéalité sainte ?

Quoique les erreurs de la liberté et les écarts du doute aient fait de plus grands ravages parmi les hommes, l'affaiblissement et l'inobservance des préceptes d'obéissance et de devoirs qu'on puise au sein de l'éducation, ont déjà porté des fruits amers dans la vie morale des femmes. Oh ! si mes vœux pouvaient être exaucés et ma parole être prise au sérieux par un grand nombre d'entre elles, non point comme un sermon qui effraie une remontrance qui vient attrister, mais comme un avertissement salutaire, un conseil de sœur ou d'amie, je les supplierais d'éviter les séductions de l'indépendance presque autant dans l

cercle des opinions et des idées théoriques que dans la réalité des actions hasardeuses elles-mêmes.

Aujourd'hui que toutes les limites sont renversées, qu'aucune autorité n'est assez imposante pour inspirer la persuasion et la confiance, lorsqu'il n'existe ni loi ni point d'arrêt à placer devant l'abîme, que chacun se fait son maître ou son dieu, quitte le bien, hante le mal à sa guise, à quel pouvoir faut-il se vouer pour conjurer le fléau qui nous afflige ? n'est-il pas opportun de le tarir à sa source en demandant à l'éducation une main plus ferme et des enseignements plus féconds pour épurer et conduire la génération naissante ?

Le désordre est-il assez grand quand on voit la révolte et le délire éclater dans l'imagination à ce point que des bras faibles de femme, des mains caressantes de mère, qui ne devraient se mouvoir que pour soigner et bénir les petits enfants que le Ciel leur envoie, s'arment d'une rage frénétique et se rougissent de leur sang ! Quand l'horreur du suicide et la crainte d'en haut n'opposent aucun frein au désespoir et à la fureur des plus faibles et des plus douces créatures, il ne reste plus qu'à s'incliner, crier grâce et invoquer la voix toute-puissante qui commande au volcan de s'éteindre et à la vague de s'arrêter.

Dans le temps où l'éducation tenait les enfants

sans cesse éloignés du foyer paternel , où les habitudes et les relations à présent si familières étaient glacées et despotiques d'une part , tremblantes et dissimulées de l'autre ; alors que la jeunesse se tenait révérencieuse et muette , obligée de contenir ou de renfermer toute pensée , tout geste spontané en présence des personnes d'expérience et d'âge ; à cette époque où la mère donnait encore sa main à baiser à sa fille avec une cérémonieuse gravité , on conçoit qu'une sage réforme ait cherché à substituer la sincérité affectueuse à ces dehors fardés qui trompaient la nature , et que , pour déraciner les abus d'un droit tyrannique tout-à-fait en désaccord avec les mœurs nouvelles , plus d'une thèse éloquente ait été soutenue en faveur de la liberté excentrique contre une volonté de fer qui repoussait toute expansion et entravait les mouvements de la vie progressive : mais à cette heure que nous sommes retombés dans un excès contraire , n'est-ce pas le devoir qu'il faudrait faire aimer , n'est-ce pas la prédication d'une autorité sainte et rajeunie ravivant l'espérance , qu'il serait important de répandre partout avec la chaleur la plus vive ?

Le dogme sublime du dévouement , la raison , la conscience , tout vient nous dire que l'obéissance est une des lois harmonieuses du monde , un principe d'ordre indispensable , une condescendance

aux sacrées conventions que la société s'impose.

Je prêche la soumission à mes filles, parce que je sens qu'à leur âge commander est un penchant à l'orgueil, tandis qu'obéir est un acte de résolution vertueuse. Je crois que dans tout état social, l'homme ne peut avoir rien de libre que sa pensée; et encore faut-il qu'il apprenne de bonne heure à la tenir esclave, pour ne laisser échapper au dehors que les paroles approuvées par les convenances : se maîtriser toujours, supporter partout des obstacles et des chaînes que nul effort ne peut briser, reconnaître au-dessus de soi l'immensité, la providence mystérieuse, devant laquelle il faut se soumettre et prier; tels sont les avertissements, les préceptes que l'éducation doit donner, les empreintes profondes qu'elle doit graver dans le cœur de la jeunesse, afin d'y laisser pour la vie des traces ineffaçables qui la guident et l'affermissent.

Je n'ignore pas qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau dans ces doctrines, et qu'il soit facile à l'imagination inspirée, à l'intelligence en travail d'inventer des siècles de bonheur aux lois plus attrayantes; je sais même que l'époque sur ce point est en veine d'espoir, en quête de système, et que des esprits généreux, de fermes volontés s'épuisent à la recherche d'un problème aussi vieux que le monde; qu'en un mot l'ère actuelle appartient au doute, au vague

et à la liberté. Mais qu'arrive-t-il pendant ce temps? c'est que la jeunesse, avide d'émotions, accessible aux théories gigantesques et brillantes, rejette du pied le présent pour s'élancer dans l'avenir, et les heures s'écoulent, et la vie réelle avec ses jours ternes et ses difficultés insurmontables, est encore aujourd'hui ce qu'elle était hier, et des instants si précieux pour l'étude sont consumés en pure perte à deviser sur des rêves.

Ces dernières réflexions ont plus de rapport qu'on ne le croit avec l'éducation des filles; on sait quelle est à présent l'influence des jeunes gens sur les opinions du monde : partout la parole la plus éclatante et la plus sûre d'elle-même leur est acquise; on fait cercle autour du jeune étourdi au langage facile et assuré qui discute avec chaleur, tranche sur tout, démolit tout et s'arrête triomphant en regardant avec dédain les ruines qu'il a faites. Il va sans dire que nos petites et nos grandes filles, auditeurs distraits, ne retiennent souvent de ces harangues réformistes que les propositions les plus étranges et les plus mal sonnantes.

Je rappellerai en outre que la vie de famille, plus resserrée, offrant par cela même un contact plus direct avec les enfants, demanderait une réserve et une circonspection que peu d'intérieurs possèdent.

Les craintes et les déceptions qui accompagnent l'existence, la rareté des liaisons durables et des affections sincères, font reporter en ce temps sur soi et sur les siens la confiante amitié qui ne trouve plus à s'épancher ailleurs. D'une part la société de nos enfants est devenue un besoin pour nous, et de l'autre, ne voulant point nous imposer une gêne continuelle en déguisant sans cesse nos paroles en leur présence, nous nous laissons aller à penser presque tout haut devant eux. Comment voulez-vous qu'ils apprennent à croire, quand ils voient que nous avons si peu de foi nous-mêmes? comment espérer qu'ils sachent respecter les personnes et les choses, quand si près d'eux ils n'entendent proférer que mépris pour les hommes et indifférence pour les principes?

Il faut appartenir à l'enseignement pour savoir de quelle manière les parents comprennent leurs devoirs : dans la plus grande partie des familles, c'est la jeune fille qui décide elle-même la direction qu'elle doit prendre, ce sont ses jugements, ses caprices qui sont consultés et suivis en dépit de toute sage détermination souvent arrêtée d'avance. Que de fois j'ai vu l'institutrice qui n'avait pas su captiver son élève par de serviles flatteries ou de faciles complaisances, être répudiée par elle! Pour la grande généralité des parents, dans tout

conflit d'autorité, dans tout démêlé un peu grave où il faudrait appuyer le pouvoir des maîtresses, c'est presque toujours le côté qui veut sévir qu'on taxe d'injustice; sans précaution, sans pitié ni respect pour une profession si pénible et si honorable, c'est devant ses enfants qu'on raille, qu'on blâme ou qu'on brise l'autorité d'une institutrice qui déplaît ou qui ne tient pas ce qu'on espérait d'elle. Aucune considération particulière ne s'attache plus à cet état; dans l'esprit du grand nombre, on ne conserve aucune reconnaissance pour les services inappréciables qu'il rend; et comment les enfants apprendraient-ils à le placer en plus haute estime que beaucoup d'autres, lorsqu'on parle devant eux de salaire et d'argent, lorsqu'on leur laisse croire qu'en payant ceux qui les élèvent on a tout acquitté envers eux, et qu'on les habitue enfin à changer aussi volontiers d'institutrice que de modiste ou de lingère?

L'énumération des fautes et des griefs qui se commettent sur ce point serait bien longue et bien désolante; d'un autre côté on ne doit pas se dissimuler que l'autorité elle-même a besoin de s'observer pour exercer sa haute mission avec toute la noblesse et tout le zèle qu'elle exige.

Plus les temps sont difficiles, plus on doit apporter d'énergie et de constance pour les tra-

verser sans faillir ; ce n'est pas sur la force des réglemens ni sur la valeur des instructions écrites qu'il faut compter entièrement, mais bien sur soi-même, sur les remontrances persuasives appuyées par les actions les plus pures et les plus méritantes. Il faut moins songer à être obéi par la menace et la punition, qu'à faire en sorte d'être imitée par la vénération et l'amour. On doit comprendre que si l'éducation ne peut se passer d'autorité, il faut qu'elle en use avec une patience et une douceur inaltérables. La directrice de grande maison surtout doit se garder de faire sentir sa puissance avec la fierté d'une châtelaine, ou la dureté d'un chef qui exploite une industrie : serviteurs, élèves et maîtresses, doivent respecter en elle la supérieure laborieuse et digne, aussitôt prête à bien exécuter qu'à bien dire, accessible et bienveillante pour tous, oublieuse du mal, sans cesse encourageante ; son inflexible équité ne doit jamais permettre qu'on puisse éluder ou censurer ses ordres ; aux nobles qualités qu'on découvre chaque jour en elle, à son regard impératif qui révèle encore un cœur de mère, il faut que sans envie et sans crainte on puisse dire en la voyant : Voilà l'autorité, voilà l'exemple.

J'ai dit pour cette fois, chère Angélique ; demain , un autre jour, il faudra vous parler plus doctement encore. Je compte en ma prochaine

lettre aborder les méthodes ; tremblez pour moi , ma très-bonne , certaines sciences m'effarouchent toujours en les voyant de loin ; lorsque j'aurai chevauché quelque temps autour de celle-ci , peut-être serai-je plus altière. Adieu donc , amie , je vous quitte pour courir de ce pas visiter Condillac et Laromiguière.●

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